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THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Vol. 28, No. 3

JULY, 1945

Don Pedro Favrot, A Creole Pepys, by Helen Parkhurst.

**Southern Louisiana and Southern Alabama in 1819: The
Journal of James Leander Cathcart, Edited by Walter
Prichard, Fred B. Kniffen, and Clair A. Brown.**

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Book Reviews, by Andre Lafargue.

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ATLANTIC COAST LINE

THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. 28, NO. 3

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✓ DON PEDRO FAVROT, A CREOLE PEPYS

By HELEN PARKHURST¹

I. THE DOCUMENTS

The man who can view his life as he lives it, in historical perspective, appreciating the drama of history in the making, and realizing the value to a later day of the minutiae of daily routine is either a treasury of source material to future scholars, or a colossal bore. Like Samuel Pepys in Seventeenth Century England, Don Pedro Favrot belongs to the fortunate first category.

Both were public servants at a time when old regimes were shifting: Pepys, a Londoner under Charles II and James II; Don Pedro Favrot, a Creole Colonial under Louis XV of France and Carlos III and IV of Spain. Pepys' diary from 1660 to 1669 bares to us the court and time of Charles II, just as Don Pedro's 110 years later, discovers to us the port of New Orleans emerging in potential power from the great, raw empire of the Middle West, as Louisiana shuttles back and forth between old world France and Spain, to find final haven with the lusty young republic of the New World.

But here the parallel fails, for as Pepys, gossiping in cypher and, as he believed, thus safe from the prying eyes of posterity, revealed himself and all his thoughts with utter frankness, Don Pedro was an un-self-conscious diarist. His chief concern was with the stirring events of which he was a part during the forty-two years of his adult military career, and that his personality emerges at all from the mass of several thousand manuscripts of state papers, diaries, letters, pamphlets and text books, military commissions and orders which he left his heirs, is a happy accident.

¹ The author gratefully acknowledges the collaboration of Mr. Ernest Rivers, Mr. Richmond Favrot, and the Favrot family for making available a mass of material hitherto unpublished.

During those forty-two years, he progressed from cadet to lieutenant-colonel, under probably more governors, French and Spanish, than any other civil or military administrator of his time, and followed this on his retirement from the army, by serving under the American regime as a member of the Louisiana Legislature.

It was during his stay in France in 1773, that Don Pedro, at the age of twenty-four, began collecting items relating to the history of his family, an activity that he continued throughout his life. In France, delving into the origins of his forebears, he obtained certified copies of many baptismal, marriage and burial records which, together with notarial acts, military papers and copies of his personal correspondence, formed the nucleus of the Favrot Papers which have been supplemented by succeeding generations of his descendants.

During the spring of 1819, Don Pedro was busy putting his house in order. He was then seventy years of age and his health was no longer good. The sight of one eye was gone and that of the other was getting dim. His last will and testament had been made. With the assistance of Josephine, his oldest daughter, he had made copies of the most important of the family papers. The originals were all arranged in packages and each package was neatly labeled. All originals were then placed in a box for his eldest son, Luis, and a package of copies was made for each of his other sons, Philogene and Bouvier. To each he wrote a farewell letter to be read after his death.

The following is quoted from that to Luis:²

I have desired before going to my grave, to leave to you, in order, all the family papers that are in my possession . . . I have had some copies made of all these papers in order to leave one to each of your brothers, and I urge them, as well as you, to preserve these papers which recall to you that I have maintained with honor the reputation and merit of your

² Doc. R-743, dated June 10, 1819, in unpublished Favrot Papers.

The Favrot documents consist of the Richmond Favrot collection of over 1800 pieces, which bear the prefix "R" or no prefix; the St. Clair Favrot collection of 112 pieces bearing the prefix "S"; the Ada Favrot Gates collection of 153 pieces with prefix "A"; and the Mortimer Favrot collection of 65 pieces having prefix "M". These collections have been combined and are now housed in the Memorial Room of McAlister Auditorium, in the custody of the librarian of the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library of Tulane University.

The Documents, up to December 31, 1803, have been published by the W.P.A., Historical Records Survey, as *Transcriptions of Manuscript Collections of Louisiana*, No. 1, *The Favrot Papers*, 9 vols., except Vol. VIII not yet published.

Since the "A" and "M" documents are now in the possession of the same owner, it has been customary, starting with Vol. III, to use the prefix "M" for this combined collection.

forefathers; and they may also be useful to your posterity. I do not need to remind you of those from whom you are descended. Preserve these honorable documents so that they may be handed down to your posterity, who cannot help but respect the memory of your ancestors I have never been able to retrieve the loss I suffered in two fires—twenty-two thousand dollars was the amount lost The greatest of my sorrows is that I am not able to provide for all in a manner worthy of you. I invoke the eternal God, the God of goodness to bless your steps and to burden you with favors.

Receive, my dear son, the eternal farewell of a tender father who loves you. My future thoughts shall be for all of you. Before being deprived entirely of my eyesight, I have endeavored to set forth for you, with my feeble pen, the farewell of your tender father.

The originals of these documents, long buried in old trunks in the attics of successive generations of eldest sons, were deposited ten years ago at the Louisiana State Museum for safety from the hazards of fire and theft. With the creation of the Historical Records Survey of the Works Progress Administration, the Favrot Documents aroused such interest that the federal representatives first catalogued the papers chronologically, placing them in cellophane envelopes and repairing any tears. Then many translations were made from the original French and Spanish, and finally their complete transcription was decided upon. This was completed from 1695 to 1803, at which stage the Works Progress Administration was dissolved. Sponsors for the work and its publishing were, at various stages, Louisiana State Museum, Louisiana State University, and Tulane University. In 1940, the documents were removed from the Cabildo to McAlister Auditorium, where the Favrot Memorial Room had been designed expressly as a repository for them.³

This vast paper panorama of early Louisiana has all the fascinating color of those gaudy days when the pomp and circumstance of proud Spain and France joined with picaresque, flamboyant, rag-tag-and-boottail adventurers to carve an empire from the wilderness. Emphasis, of course, is on the military phase of that stirring frontier life, because Don Pedro Favrot was born to a military tradition which went back to the early fifteen hundreds.

³ McAlister Auditorium, Tulane University, was erected in 1940 as a gift to Tulane by Mrs. Amelie McAlister Upshur, a non-resident of the state, in honor of her mother, the late Armantine Reynaud McAlister, formerly of Baton Rouge and a descendant of Don Pedro Favrot.

Don Pedro was born in this country but lived temporarily in France and Spain, and always maintained close European contacts. He served his apprenticeship in diplomacy by maintaining peace and friendly relations with the Indians, he administered justice—civil and military—he lived close to the land he loved, he entertained lavishly those of high degree sent by his sovereign, he was an exemplary son, husband and father, but above all, he emerges from the documents as a man of wit, discrimination, judgment, kindness and simplicity, who could cultivate the arts of war with the rewards of leisure.

II. MILITARY BACKGROUND

The military tradition alluded to above, goes back without interruption to Francois Faverot,⁴ a Bourbonnais, who served in the armies of Henri II (1518-1554), Francois II (1554-1560), and Charles IX (1560-1574), although the earlier lineage of the family can be traced from numerous manuscripts preserved in the Cabinet of Titles of the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, prior to 1430.⁵

Francois' son, grandson and great-grandson were each in turn counsellors of the Parliament of Moulins and of the Presidial Court. Claude, second son of Gabriel, who was the great-grandson of Francois, was born about 1643. He was captain in the regiment of Auvergne.

Claude's second son, in turn, Joseph Claude, the grandfather of Don Pedro Favrot, was a brigadier-general in the king's armies. This was a rank created by Louis XIV in 1668 to designate the generals in command of a brigade, which later became confused with field marshals, being called "engeneurs des champs et marches." He was appointed First Draftsman in the royal armies by the Marquis de Louvois, making various maps of Flanders, Lorraine and Luxembourg, "ten leagues on each side of the course of the Rhine from Huningue to Coblenz",⁶ and according to family tradition, designed, under Vauban, the Fortress of Verdun. Two treasures of the Favrot Collection are a snuffbox and seal ring given Joseph Claude by Louis XIV. Although Joseph Claude was never in America, his portrait, brought from France by Don Pedro, hangs today in New Orleans, his hair in the profusion of curls to his shoulders, dictated by the

⁴ Faverot was the spelling frequently used at that time and into the eighteenth century. See Doc. R-99, *Favrot Papers*, II, 29.

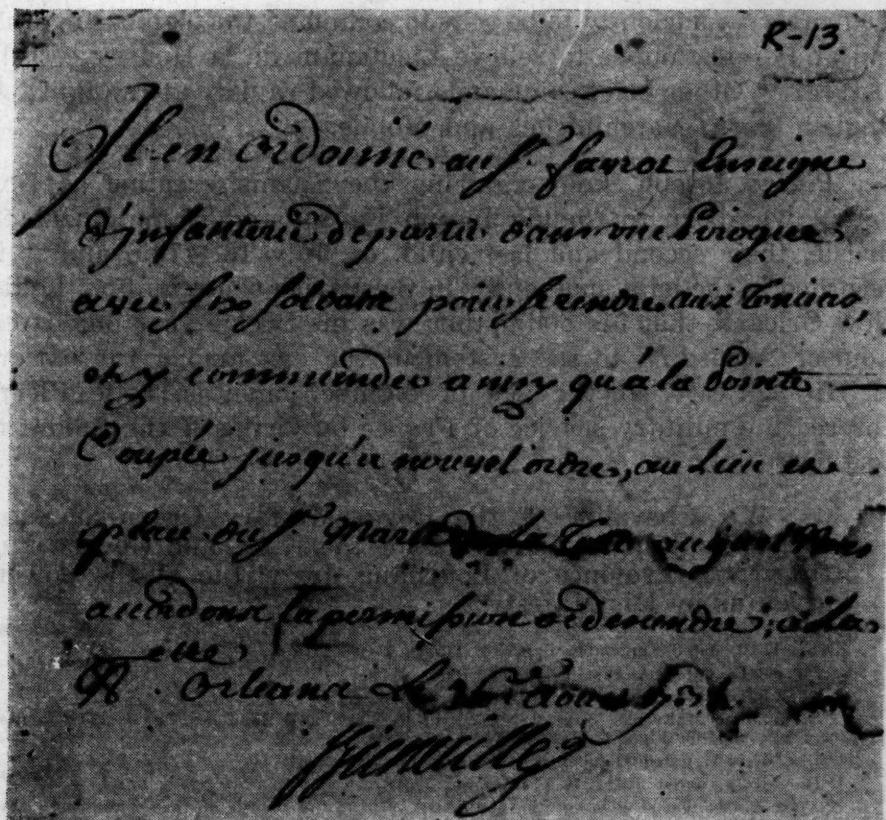
⁵ Doc. M-215, unpublished *Favrot Papers*.

⁶ Memoire of Joseph Claude de Favrot, date about 1695, *Favrot Papers*, I, 1.

fashion of the day, wearing a steel breastplate and indicating with a discreet forefinger, his master-work in the background, the fortification of Verdun.

Claude Joseph, the father of Don Pedro and the fourth child of Joseph Claude, was born at Versailles, December 6, 1701, and baptized the following day in the Church of Notre Dame. At the age of twenty-two, on September 15, 1723, he, too, entered military service as a volunteer cadet in a company of troops of the king, in the regiment commanded by Le Marquis de la Chene-laye, Duc de Neuf Brissac.⁷

About 1728, he was evidently in Louisiana because a letter in 1733 from Bienville to Maurepas states that "Sieur Chevalier Faverot has likewise served five years as a cadet in the colony during the war with the Natchez, in which he performed marvels."⁸



⁷ Military Certificate, *ibid.*, I, 5.

⁸ Letter, Bienville to Maurepas, May 18, 1733, in Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, translators and editors, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, III (1704-1743), 618.

This colonial service was rewarded with a commission as ensign⁹ by Louis XV, and he was ordered by Bienville to leave New Orleans in a pirogue with six soldiers for the Tunicas, an Indian tribe, to replace Sieur Maret de la Tour in command of that place and Pointe Coupée.¹⁰

He found time, however, during the following year, September 30, 1735, to marry in St. Louis Parish Church, New Orleans, Louise Elizabeth Bruslé, whose father was a member of the Superior Council. One of the twelve witnesses who signed their marriage contract was Bienville.¹¹

Early the next year, Claude Joseph accompanied Bienville in his expedition against the Chickasaw Indians, which resulted in the defeat of the French at the battle of Ackia, near the present Pontotoc, Mississippi. He received a bullet wound in the thigh, one of the sixty French casualties,¹² but he had soon recuperated sufficiently to be sent to command the Tunicas again¹³ and at Pointe Coupée to relieve Lieutenant de la Houssaye, July 21, 1742.¹⁴ Other brief commands followed rapidly at the Balize,¹⁵ English Turn, Natchitoches and Mobile.

Pierre Joseph, known during the Spanish regime as Don Pedro, was born to Claude Joseph Favrot and Dame Elizabeth Bruslé, their second and last child, on July 16, 1749, and it is recorded in the baptismal entry in the Parish Church of St. Louis, New Orleans, that his godmother was his twelve year old sister, Louise. According to the custom of the day among the officers of His Majesty, at the age of eighteen months, little Pierre entered the military service of France by virtue of the following certificate:¹⁶

We, Chevalier of the Royal Military Order of Saint Louis, Captain of the vessels of the King, and Governor of the whole Province of Louisiana, by virtue of the powers given us by His Majesty;

⁹ Doc. R-12, dated September 6, 1733, *Favrot Papers*, I, 6.

¹⁰ Doc. R-13 dated August 16, 1734, *ibid.*

¹¹ Doc. R-16, dated September 30, 1735, *ibid.*, I, 7.

¹² Bienville to Maurepas, June 28, 1736, in Rowland and Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, I (1729-1740), 307, 319.

¹³ Doc. R-18A, dated October 6, 1736, *Favrot Papers*, I, 10.

¹⁴ Doc. R-29, dated July 21, 1742, *ibid.*, I, 13.

¹⁵ An inconsequential post on the southeast pass at the mouth of the Mississippi. First occupied in 1722, it was a small flat island called Toulouse, later changed to "la Balise," meaning beacon.

¹⁶ Doc. R-35, dated January 1, 1751, *Favrot Papers*, I, 16.

We certify to have received Sieur Pierre Joseph de Favrot to serve as a Cadet of Infantry in one of the companies kept by His Majesty in this colony.

In faith whereof we have delivered to him these presents which should be recorded at the office of the Comptroller of the Marine.

Given at New Orleans on 1 January, 1751.

(Signed:) Vaudreuil

Recorded in the office of the Comptroller of the Marine by the undersigned Commissaire and Comptroller in Louisiana.

(Signed:) D'auberville

At the age of nine, the maturing Pierre was appointed cadet à l'eguillette in a company of infantry serving in Louisiana by Governor Kerlerec.¹⁷ Not quite five years later, September 15, 1763, at the ripe age of fourteen, Pierre was retired from military service on halfpay by a Certificate of Retirement issued by Governor Kerlerec¹⁸ in compliance with an ordinance of the King; and Dabbadie, Commissaire General and Ordonnateur of the Marine in Louisiana, directed that the sum of two hundred livres be paid annually to Pierre as a retirement pension.

Although this form of nepotism irks us as modern democrats, it then meant little more than well-earned reward to the father.

In the meantime, his father, Claude Joseph, had been advanced to Captain in the troops of Louisiana, and on August 1, 1754, had been put in charge of a convoy of four companies of fifty soldiers each and several civilians to make the hazardous journey to join Macarty Mactigue, Commandant of the Illinois. His official instructions¹⁹ issued by Kerlerec covered fourteen pages relating to measures to be taken for insuring on land and water the life, health and safety of the convoy and the preservation of foods and supplies. The following is an interesting sample of the detailed orders:

Regarding the homages owed to God by every good Christian, we depend upon the sentiments of Religion which we know are held by Sieur de Favrot, to see that the people in his care say regularly the evening and morning prayers. We do not believe that this should be the object of a special

¹⁷ Doc. R-49, dated January 1, 1759, *ibid.*, I, 33.

¹⁸ Doc. R-60, dated September, 15, 1763, *ibid.*, I, 40.

¹⁹ Docs. R-43A and R-43B, dated August 1, 8, 1754, *ibid.*, I, 19-20.

recommendation to him because such would mean to deny him the reputation that is characteristic of every good man. We earnestly direct him to do all in his power against habitual blasphemers and we expect him to reprimand with zeal such offenses against divinity and religion.

One of the interesting sorties from Fort Chartres of the Illinois made by Claude Joseph was that begun on March 1, 1757, and destined for Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He took with him sufficient rations for one hundred and ninety men for three months, and three hundred pounds of powder with lead in proportion. One vessel of the convoy was destined for Fort Vincennes, and Claude Joseph was instructed to see it safely in the Wabash River before continuing on his way. He was instructed to keep a journal, to record all important data, especially those concerning tributary rivers, which he might have to explore later, and to get all information possible from travelers whom he might meet.²⁰

Governor Kerlerec wrote a personal letter to Claude Joseph at Fort Duquesne, May 1, 1757,²¹ saying that he was greatly pleased that he "had performed so well in command of this convoy."

The following year Claude Joseph led his Indian scouts and sixty volunteers on a scouting expedition up the Tennessee river, as far as forty leagues above the falls, to ascertain whether the English were making any settlements in this territory.²² Again his success was commended by Kerlerec, who expressed regret at being unable, since he was so badly needed at Fort Chartres, to permit him to return to New Orleans before the following spring; but that he was sending him a cask of wine, two casks of brandy, some sugar and some coffee.²³

Before Kerlerec left Louisiana to return to France, he had one more order for Claude Joseph when in September, 1761, he was directed to embark on His Majesty's vessel, *Le Cerf*, with a detachment of troops to go in search of nine French soldiers and sailors, all deserters from the garrison of the Balize who after having "stolen many effects of the King had seized by violence, open force and at the point of the sword, a ship belonging to a merchant of New Orleans, on which they had sailed at daybreak, August 31."²⁴

²⁰ Doc. R-45, dated February 25, 1757, *ibid.*, I, 26.

²¹ Doc. R-46, dated May 1, 1757, *ibid.*, I, 28.

²² Doc. R-48, dated April 14, 1758, *ibid.*, I, 29.

²³ Doc. A-1, dated August 8, 1758, *ibid.*, I, 32.

²⁴ Doc. A-2, dated September 4, 1761, *ibid.*, I, 35.

So far, no records have been found that give the results of this expedition in search of deserters, nor is there any record of further military services by Claude Joseph.²⁵

Climaxing his colonial career of forty years, however, he received two citations at this time. Louis XV issued the first, the much coveted Cross of Saint Louis, an honor which had also been attained by his father, Joseph Claude, the Brigadier-General. This Royal Order was conferred at Versailles, February 28, 1764, countersigned by the Duc de Choiseul, directing Kerlerec as Governor of Louisiana to administer the required oath and receive Sieur Claude Joseph de Favrot into the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis.²⁶

The other citation was the following CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION:

We certify that Sieur de Favrot, Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis, captain of long service in the troops of this colony has conducted himself very well during eleven years under our orders, and that we are entirely satisfied with the zeal, exactitude and prudence of which he has given ample proof on all occasions and under all assignments in the service of the King, both in particular and in general missions, and especially in the country of the Illinois where he served with distinction and efficiency; therefore, he is fully and justly entitled to this certificate, to be used by him for all deserving purposes.

Done at New Orleans, in our office of the government,
20 September, 1763.

(Signed:) Kerlerec.²⁷

Claude Joseph shortly followed Kerlerec, sailing for France with Mme. Favrot in April, 1767, in order to get the best medical skill of Paris for his wife who was suffering from cancer. She failed to respond to treatment, however, and died there April 13, 1768, at the age of fifty-one years and was buried in the Cemetery of Saints Innocens.²⁸ A brief second marriage to a Mme. de Goulet, who was many years his junior, ending unhappily, he left her in Paris in 1776 and went to Senlis on the Novette river, thirty-three miles northeast of Paris, where he lived on his pension as a Knight of Saint Louis.²⁹

²⁵ Several "R" interesting documents pertaining to Pontiac, conferences between him and Neyon de Villiers, duly notarized, also reports rendered D'Abbadie by de Villiers, cause one to wonder, from their presence among Don Pedro's papers, whether Claude Joseph may not have returned to Fort Chartres for further service. *Ibid.*, I, 41-57.

²⁶ Doc. R-65, dated February 28, 1764, *ibid.*, I, 48.

²⁷ Doc. R-61, dated September 20, 1763, *ibid.*, I, 41.

²⁸ Doc. R-86A, dated September 30, 1773, *ibid.*, II, 18.

²⁹ Doc. R-107, dated November 30, 1777, *ibid.*, II, 45, indicates that Claude Joseph died on November 6, being buried at Senlis.

III. EARLY SERVICE IN LOUISIANA AND FRANCE

When his parents left Louisiana for Paris in April, 1767, Pierre was almost eighteen years old. He went to live with his maternal grandmother, Mme. Bruslé, on la rue Corps de Garde, New Orleans. On her death that same fall, Pierre re-entered military service, December 30, 1767,³⁰ and was assigned to the Post of the Arkansas, under the command of his brother-in-law, Chevalier de Clouet,³¹ husband of Pierre's only sister, Louise.

It was while serving there that he received the news of his mother's death.³² Later when O'Reilly with the Spanish fleet arrived in New Orleans, August 17, 1769, to take possession of Louisiana for Spain, Pierre was entrusted with carrying the official letter from the Governor to Louis Saint Ange de Bellerive, Commandant of the Illinois at St. Louis.³³ He made the trip by canoe with two Indian guides.

Immediately after this, Pierre started preparation to join his father in France, and his Certificate of Retirement was certified by Maious³⁴ in Cap-Française, Saint-Domingue, December 30, 1772. He arrived in France early in 1773 and on July 30 the King issued him a commission as First Lieutenant³⁵ in one of the companies of the Regiment of America, garrisoned at the fortified Port of Rochefort which had grown from a sleepy fishing village when Louis XIV selected it for a naval station in 1616 and Vauban planned its fortifications. Given a leave of absence³⁶ to attend to family affairs, Pierre with commendable foresight,³⁷ had his father go before the Notaries Maigret and Demaraudel in Paris on January 10, 1774, to execute a Notarial Act³⁸ authorizing his son to contract marriage with whomever he might desire and in whatever country.

What happy visits of father and son featured this joyous year! Both Pierre and his father sat for portraits in Paris and renewed family contacts, collecting parish records of births,

³⁰ Doc. R-72C, dated December 30, 1767, Instruction issued by Aubry, *ibid.*, I, 71.

³¹ Alexandre de Clouet, who served as commandant of the Post of Arkansas from 1767 to 1770, after more than thirty years in the French service. He died an honorary Lieutenant-Colonel at the Attakapas in 1789. See Stanley Faye, "The Arkansas Post of Louisiana: Spanish Domination," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (1944), 632.

³² Doc. R-73, letter from his uncle St. Martin, dated October 20, 1768, *Favrot Papers*, I, 71.

³³ Doc. R-75, Instructions issued by Le Chevalier de Clouet, dated October 16, 1769, *ibid.*, II, 1.

³⁴ Doc. R-80A, dated December 30, 1772, *ibid.*, II, 13.

³⁵ Doc. R-83, dated July 30, 1773, *ibid.*, II, 14.

³⁶ Doc. S-8, dated December 28, 1773, *ibid.*, II, 19.

³⁷ Doc. R-90, dated January 10, 1774, *ibid.*, II, 21

baptisms, marriages and deaths, family portraits and cherished souvenirs for Pierre to take back with him when he returned to America.

His leave over, Pierre was ordered³⁸ to take command of two hundred troops and embark for Saint-Domingue on the King's vessel, *La Bricolle*. Returning to France he served a year and a half as a Lieutenant at the recruiting station on the Isle de Ré, that outlying bastion which one hundred and seventy years later was to be an anomaly of World War II, when the Germans retained isolated control of it with La Rochelle and the sectors of St. Nazaire, Morbihan and Royan, long after Eisenhower's landings in France.

This no doubt rather dull recruiting service ended for Pierre, September 21, 1776, when he was ordered to take command of one hundred and eighty recruits and seventy regular soldiers and embark on the vessel, *Le Père de Famille*, for Martinique.³⁹ Although he was only twenty-seven, during this voyage Pierre began to show that kindly paternal care for those under him which was to be one of his most endearing qualities, for on his arrival in Martinique he immediately filed an official report with D'Argout, Lieutenant-Governor General of the Windward Islands, charging that the troops under his command had been given food of a quality inferior to that required by ordinances of the King.⁴⁰ On his return to the Isle de Ré, he followed it up with an official letter to Sartine,⁴¹ Minister of the Marine, Versailles, who ordered an investigation to be held at Rochefort on the return of the Captain of *Le Père de Famille*.

A brief ten years after leaving Louisiana, Claude Joseph died at Senlis, November 6, 1777, and his father's death severing all close ties with France, Pierre decided to leave for Louisiana as soon as possible. First though, pursuing one of his life-long dreams, the winning of the Cross of St. Louis, which had climaxed the careers of both his father and grandfather, Pierre, before leaving the service of France made application, but evidently his youth was against him and his petition was denied. The severing of the ties of blood and the abandoning of all hope of ever receiving the coveted French decoration lent a note of sad-

³⁸ Doc. R-92, dated January 20, 1774, *ibid.*, II, 22.

³⁹ Doc. R-101, dated September 21, 1776, *ibid.*, II, 37.

⁴⁰ Doc. R-102, date 1776, *ibid.*, II, 38.

⁴¹ Doc. R-103, dated May 10, 1777, *ibid.*, II, 39.

ness to the routine steps of his departure. On the first of the following January he obtained a Certificate of Retirement⁴² from the King, and for merit was breveted⁴³ a Captain in the colonial troops, receiving the following Certificate of Commendation by Le Comte de Genlis:⁴⁴

We, Comte de Genlis, Brigadier-General in the armies of the King and Inspector-General of the troops of the colonies, do certify that Monsieur de Favrot, lieutenant, has served in different corps of the troops of the colonies with zeal and exactitude; that, in particular, having been assigned to conduct two detachments to Saint-Domingue, he proved his intelligence and firmness in both voyages; that whenever we inspected the corps in which he was serving, the commanders thereof always gave us the best account of him; that he left the service of France for family reasons demanding his presence in Louisiana.

We recommend him to the good attention of the general of His Catholic Majesty under whom he is going to serve.

The services rendered by M. de Favrot induce us to issue the present certificate to be used by him as he might see fit.
Paris, 8 December, 1778.

(Signed:) Le Comte de Genlis

Thus, Louisiana being at that time a Spanish colony, it was necessary for Pierre to enter the service of the King of Spain if he wished to pursue a military career in Louisiana. His life now enters another phase; there is an interlude of court life, far removed from the lusty barracks or the rolling decks of ships that had been the setting for all his days since his sheltered life as a boy. He had known the social amenities as a child in his mothers drawing room, later as a youth he had tasted briefly the pleasures New Orleans offered while he lived in his grandmother's town house, but most of all he had learned the arts of gracious living at the Post of the Attakapas, as St. Martinville was then called. This hamlet had a gay social life which a little later with the advent of many royalist emigrés from the French Revolution was to earn for it the title of "Little Paris."⁴⁵ Its fashionable circle had more polish than New Orleans, where the rowdy frontier rubbed elbows with the gentry and life was exciting rather than formal.

⁴² Doc. R-111A, dated January 1, 1778, *ibid.*, II, 46.

⁴³ Doc. R111, Commission issued by Louis XVI to Don Pedro Favrot as Captain, dated January 1, 1778, *ibid.*, II, 45.

⁴⁴ Doc. R-128A, dated December 8, 1778, *ibid.*, II, 58.

⁴⁵ George W. Cable, *Strange True Stories of Louisiana*, 92-93.

The Attakapas was the home of Louise Favrot de Clouet after her marriage, and she was always happy to have her young brother, her godson, with her. It was no doubt her solicitude that had placed Pierre under command of her husband, Captain de Clouet, at the Post of the Arkansas when their parents went to France.

Two witnesses at this late day can testify that Louise was like the Valiant Woman of Proverbs and that Pierre could have had no better tutor than his godmother for the trying days in the maze of court intrigue that now lay ahead of him. One is the gentle, thoughtful portrait of her done in her maturity which now hangs in New Orleans, and the other is the tribute, some twenty-five years later, of a French contemporary, M. Robin, who met her during his travels in America, an account of which he published in 1807 at Paris, *Voyages dans . . . la Louisiane . . . pendant les années 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 et 1806*.⁴⁶ He says:

. . . I found her (Madame Louise Favrot de Clouet) with several of her children. Never have I seen old age more venerable. Her hair, whitened by the years, made her gentle, open face more touching—a face which kept a freshness rare at her age in the colony. Her manners had none of the backward coldness of the Creoles; they showed the ease and affability of a European who has spent her life in good society.

Her own house was the best planned in the district. Her slaves, or rather her servants, were well dressed, had a satisfied air, . . . and seemed assured in her presence. She was, indeed, the best of mistresses—an unusual thing among the women in the colonies.

Now in 1778, we can imagine Pierre, twenty-nine and extremely personable if his two portraits in New Orleans may be relied upon, visiting the fashionable coat makers of Paris, getting apparelled in all the ruffles and furbelows required of one who would make his bow at court. Then with all the charm of youth and gallantry, paying his respects to Comte de Aranda, the Spanish ambassador to the court of France, for an application of transfer to the service of Spain. But intrigue, not youth and gallantry, was the coin in that decadent court, and his petition was denied. Vaudreuil and Le Comte D'Egmont interceded in his behalf but—*cherchez la femme*—and it was a woman, the Duchesse de Fitz-James, who alone had sufficient influence with Aranda to effect the desired transfer to the Spanish army.

⁴⁶ Claude C. Robin, *Voyages dans l'intérieur de la Louisiane, de la Floride occidentale, et dans les îles de la Martinique et de Saint-Domingue, pendant les années 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 et 1806* (Paris, 1807), III, 86-87.

Madame la Duchesse de Fitz-James was herself a remarkable woman of fascinating antecedents. The wife of the grandson of James Fitz-James, Duke of Berwick, natural son of James II of England and Arabella Churchill, sister of the Duke of Marlborough, she wielded no little power in the courts of France and Spain. It would be interesting to know why this great lady interested herself in the affairs of Pierre, but her young protégé, although all the rest of his life was an open book to be read from his diffuse diaries and letters, appears to have preserved an unwonted reticence in regard to the cause of her interest in him. Perhaps his experience with court intrigue disgusted him and he longed to forget it in the larger air of that America where he was born.

We do know, however, that her husband's grandfather, that James Fitz-James, Duke of Berwick, who was the son of James II, was Bourbonnais, like the Faverots, and was born at Moulins⁴⁷ in 1670 when Gabriel Faverot was fifty-four years of age and Counsellor of the Parliament of Moulins and Counsellor of the Presidial Court, the third generation of Faverots to hold those positions. And we know that Gabriel's grandson, Joseph Claude, was a contemporary of Berwick, and that they both served in the armies of Louis XIV; one as a brigadier-general, the other as a marshal of France. These two points of contact, Moulins and military service, may establish an old family acquaintance which could be a clue to the interest in Pierre taken by Madame la Duchesse. Also Berwick's grandson in 1778, the very year when Pierre was applying for his transfer, had published his grandfather's *Mémoires*, to which Montesquieu contributed many eulogies and impressions.⁴⁸ Berwick's decisive victory at Almanza during the war of the Spanish Succession established Philip V on the throne of Spain and Berwick was rewarded by being made a peer of France by Louis XIV and duke of Liria and Xereca by Philip V, which accounts for the great power of his grandson's wife in the courts of both France and Spain.

At all events, the Favrot Papers contain a titillating exchange of correspondence between D'Egmont, Aranda and Madame la Duchesse. The following from Aranda on July 11, 1778, expresses his reluctance to intercede:

⁴⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, III, 466.

⁴⁸ Abbé Hooke, editor, *Mémoires du Marechal de Berwick*, *passim*.

Madame la Duchesse,

Although according to our usage in Spain, the ambassadors should not engage in the claims of individuals and rather tell them to address themselves directly to the office concerned, I am willing to risk the blame in order to express my gratefulness for all the kindnesses you have shown me. I shall transmit to the Minister of the Indies the petition of M. Favrot and will send you the answer that he shall give me. If the matter depended on myself I would certainly do everything possible in order to give you evidence of the respect and esteem with which I have the honor to be, Madame la Duchesse, your very humble and obedient servant.

(Signed:) Aranda⁴⁹

Immediately on receiving an answer from the Minister of the Indies, Aranda wrote again to Madame la Duchesse, renewing his homages and informing her that in obedience to her orders he had sent to his court (Spain) the *mémoire* of Sieur Favrot and had done his best to make successful the protection (for Favrot) of Madame la Duchesse, consequently he has just received this answer: that His Majesty grants to the said officer the permit to return to Louisiana where he will be employed in the same grade (captain) in the regiment in the province; however, he shall embark from one of the ports of Spain. Aranda asks her to make all this known to Sieur Favrot.⁵⁰

At this news, the secretary of Madame la Duchesse, Bouchet Groignard, wrote to Pierre confirming her successful intercession with Aranda:⁵¹

You will understand, Sieur, by the answer of the ambassador of Spain to Madame la Duchesse de Fitz-James that she has taken great interest in your behalf and how much you can depend upon her assistance.

I have the honor to be your very humble servant,

(Signed:) Bouchet Groignard

After this exchange of letters, Aranda suggested that to save time, Pierre go direct to Madrid and present a letter that he would give him to Don José de Galvez, Minister of the Indies, and an uncle of Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana. Pierre acted on this advice, and was presented to His Catholic Majesty, King Carlos III. On November 20, 1778, the day on

⁴⁹ Doc. R-113, *Favrot Papers*, II, 47. Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea, Conde Aranda, was the Spanish Ambassador at Paris from 1773 to 1787. He was a man of great ability and capacity for work, but with a captious temper and sarcastic tongue.

⁵⁰ Doc. R-115, dated August 18, 1778, *Favrot Papers*, II, 50.

⁵¹ Doc. R-116, date 1778, *ibid.*, II, 51.

which he received his commission⁵² as captain of a company in the second battalion of the Regiment of Infantry of Louisiana, he entered the service of Spain as Don Pedro José Favrot, and "Don Pedro" he was for the rest of his life to his family and friends.

IV. BACK IN THE COLONIES

Two months later, Don Pedro sailed from Corunna, Spain, and on his arrival in New Orleans had his commission recorded in the office of the Royal Comptroller of the Province, April 1, 1779, and immediately reported for duty to Don Bernardo de Galvez.

The youth of Don Pedro must have formed a basis of congeniality with Galvez, the brilliant young Spanish governor, for Don Pedro was almost immediately taken into his confidence and had a high place in Galvez' councils. This was in line with Spain's policy of making officers of the Creoles and giving them posts of trust, commensurate with their knowledge of the terrain.

Don Pedro was present at the *junta de guerra* convoked by Galvez on July 13, 1779, when he laid the situation regarding the fear of an English attack before the council, and asked that each present a written opinion for meeting it. Those present, according to John Walton Caughey's *Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana*,⁵³ were Colonel Manuel Gonzales, Lieutenant-Colonels Estevan Miro and Pedro Piernas, Captains Martin Mozun, Francisco Cruzat, Alexander Coussot, Manuel de Nava, Hilario de Estenoy, Juan Delavillebreuve, Joaquin de Blanca, Pedro Favrot, and Jacinto Panis, who acted as secretary.

Two days later at the request of Galvez, Don Pedro submitted his written opinion and recommendations for the defense of New Orleans and the colony in the impending conflict with the British which, preserved in his own handwriting, is in part as follows:

Having been ordered to give my opinion on the prospects of an approaching war and on incursions that might be made by the English in this province, I believe that since their forces seem to be concentrated at Manchac, it would be prudent not to divide our forces and to join to the regular troops the militia of New Orleans, pending the orders to move. The country being open and our forces small, we cannot under-

⁵² Doc. R-125, dated November 20, 1778, *ibid.* II, 55.

⁵³ John W. Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkley, 1934), 151, citing Archivo General de Indias, *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, Legajo 112.

take to guard all the openings that the enemy might use for invasion; but since the upper part of the Mississippi, by its course, offers great facility to descend to the capital (New Orleans), and since there is reason to believe that Manchac, which is above, will be the place for the formation of an expedition against us, according to the movements and precautions of which we have knowledge through information received by the governor (Galvez) :

I think that it will be necessary to place a schooner and some gunboats in convenient places to obstruct their (the English) descent Chef Menteur, an important place to guard and fortify, should, in my opinion, have adequate forces to defend the entrance and to prevent any enemy attempt to surprise the city The Fort of the Bayou (Spanish Fort), if put in good condition, would serve a great deal to guard ourselves at this point

There should be a battery at the English Turn to prevent the boats from coming up the Mississippi and, if possible, it would be important to concentrate some schooners and gunboats at that point. Notwithstanding all the careful prudence of a military commander I see much difficulty in the defense of this colony, unless there be available troops in sufficient number to guard the posts of Manchac, English Turn, Chef Menteur and the Bayou; and also there should be available a sufficient number of schooners and gunboats to guard the Mississippi where the need requires.⁵⁴

New Orleans, 15 July, 1779. (Signed:) Pedro José Favrot.

It is interesting to note that thirty-five years later, Don Pedro was again called upon as a member of the committee of defense of the state legislature to render an opinion on the principal means to be employed for the defense of Louisiana against the same foe, the English, but we will treat of that later.

Pessimism similar to that of Don Pedro characterized the other opinions rendered, but Galvez, disregarding them and in spite of a delay caused by a hurricane, set out to attack Fort Bute at Manchac, which taken by surprise, was quickly captured. Galvez, with his customary audacity, after a few days pushed on to Baton Rouge, which also fell after a short seige.

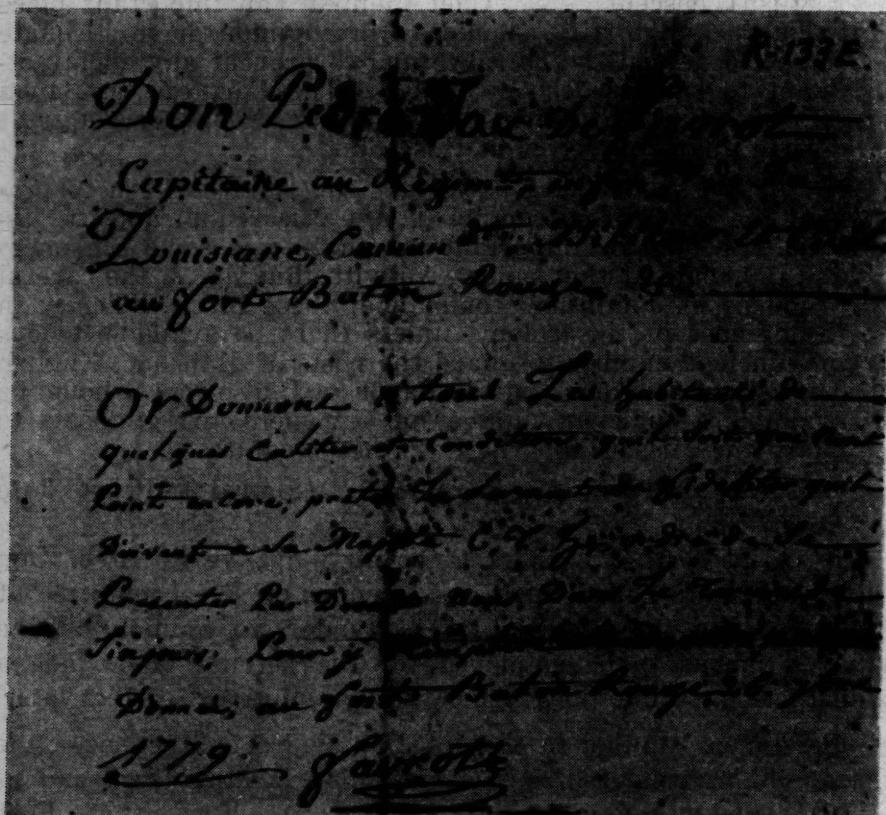
V. THE BATON ROUGE COMMAND

Don Pedro accompanied this expedition and, in accordance with numerous original documents in possession of his descendants, as well as those in the Archives of Seville, the Spanish

⁵⁴ Doc. R-132, dated July 15, 1779, *Favrot Papers*, II, 59.

West Florida Records and the Despatches of the Spanish Governors, he was left in command by Galvez of the newly captured fort and adjacent territory.⁵⁵ Galvez immediately returned to New Orleans to prepare for a similar expedition against Mobile.

The preliminary draft of the Articles of Capitulation⁵⁶ of the fort of Baton Rouge and its garrison by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Dickson, commander of Fort Richmond, as the English called it, was written in Don Pedro's own handwriting.



⁵⁵ Historians Martin, Gayarré, Fortier, and Rowland have obviously erred in not consulting source material. All state that Grand-Pré was left in command by Galvez. The reader is referred to Roscoe R. Hill's *Catalogue of Documents Relative to the History of the United States, Papeles de Cuba*, for the following observations: Legajo 192, mostly for the year 1779; Legajo 193, mostly for the year 1780; Legajo 194, mostly for the year 1781. The description of these legajos, or bundles, indicates that the correspondence to and from Baton Rouge was with Favrot, whereas the correspondence with Grand-Pré was to and from Pointe Coupée, there not being a single reference to indicate that Grand-Pré was at Baton Rouge.

In Legajo 1448, letter No. 681 (W.P.A. translations), Boulogny and Miro both testify to Don Pedro having been in command at Baton Rouge following its capture (Despatches of the Spanish Governor).

In Legajo 1443A, letter No. 600, Grand-Pré, petitioning for a promotion to Carondelet, gives his own experience record, and makes no claim, in 1794, to having commanded at Baton Rouge.

Add to this the forty or more documents in the Favrot Papers and the evidence is overwhelming, from Galvez, Piernas, Miro, Favrot, and Grand-Pré himself.

⁵⁶ Doc. R-133, dated September 21, 1779, Favrot Papers, II, 64.

Just five days after the fall of Baton Rouge, September 26, Don Pedro issued an official order,⁵⁷ under his authority "as civil and military commandant, to all the inhabitants of all conditions and of any station whatsoever, who have not yet taken the oath of allegiance which they owe to His Catholic Majesty, to appear before me within six days for the purpose of performing such duty." (See illustration).

Don Pedro remained as Commandant of the Post of Baton Rouge for nearly two years during which time he remodeled the fort and demonstrated his ability in both civil and military affairs. The Favrot Papers contain many manuscripts covering this period which give a clear picture of the various duties and responsibilities of a post commandant during Spanish colonial days.

His administration won from Galvez the following tribute in his letter to Don Pedro on November 10, 1779:

All who have passed your fort tell me of the progress being made in the repairs, due to the activity with which you not only make the laborers work, but work unsparingly yourself in conscientiously supervising them, which gives me much satisfaction, and for which I thank you in the name of the King.⁵⁸

New Orleans, 10 November, 1779. (Signed:) B'do de Galvez

It was at this time that the notorious Marie Glass affair⁵⁹ occurred at Brown Cliffs, near Baton Rouge. Don Pedro, by virtue of his official position, acted as judge during the trial. The murderer was found guilty and was condemned to be executed. This case has been romanticized by subsequent historians, but the court proceedings leave no doubt as to the guilt of Marie Glass. Don Pedro passed the sentence and referred the case to the Governor for final review, as was required in all cases involving capital punishment. In his report to the Governor he said: "I am certain that Marie will not escape the death penalty; such a sentence is even too mild for such an infernal nature."

Don Pedro's verdict was confirmed by Acting-Governor Piernas, and Marie Glass was executed according to the provisions

⁵⁷ Doc. R-133E, dated September 26, 1779, *ibid.*, II, 70.

⁵⁸ Doc. R-140, dated November 10, 1779, *ibid.*, II, 76.

⁵⁹ Henry P. Dart, editor, "Trial of Mary Glass for Murder, 1780," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, VI (1923), 289-654.

of the sentence, but not before she had tried every imaginable ruse to escape with her life. One of the items in the Favrot Collection is a small wooden cross carved by Marie Glass and presented by her to her judge. In all probability, this was the first legal execution of a woman in Louisiana.

On August 20, 1781, Don Pedro surrendered the command of the Post of Baton Rouge, including the fort, all military equipment, and archives⁶⁰ to Don Ignacio de Chalmette,⁶¹ captain in the regiment of Louisiana, by order of the Governor, and received this Certificate issued by Bernardo de Otero, General Comptroller of the Province of Louisiana:

I do certify that Don Pedro Favrot, former Commandant of the Fort of Baton Rouge, has delivered to this office the account of foods, utensils, ammunition, and effects in his charge from September 24, 1779, on which date he took command of the fort, until August 21 of the current year when he surrendered the command to Don Ignacio Chalmette, which accounts have been compared with the records in this office and have been found correct, with the exception of a small difference in favor of the royal treasury in the items of ammunition and effects. And on his request, I have issued the present in New Orleans, December 15, 1781.⁶²

(Signed:) Bernardo de Otero

Don Pedro at once reported to New Orleans and continued in service there for nearly two years, purchasing two houses: one on the corner of Bourbon and Dumaine from Claudio Chabot for 1800 pesos cash,⁶³ and the second house bought in June, 1782, from Henrique Despres and located at Royal and St. Philip streets.⁶⁴

On October 14, 1783, Governor Estevan Miro, the successor of Galvez, ordered Don Pedro to take temporary command of the Post of Mobile during the leave of absence, due to illness, of Enrique Grimarest.

⁶⁰ Doc. R-163, Inventory of Archives, dated August 20, 1781, *Favrot Papers*, II, 118.

⁶¹ Ignace Martin de Lino de Chalmette (1755-1815) was the posthumous son of Louis Xavier Martin de Lino de Chalmette, who had come from Quebec previous to 1751 and had married Madeline Marguerite Broutin, daughter of Ignace Broutin and his wife, the widow of Francois Philippe de Mandeville, Sieur de Marigny.

⁶² Doc. R-166, dated December 15, 1781, *Favrot Papers*, II, 128.

⁶³ Doc. R-164, dated October 1, 1781, *ibid.*, II, 123.

⁶⁴ Doc. R-171, dated June 7, 1782, *ibid.*, III, 14.

VI. COMMANDANT AT MOBILE

At that time Mobile had a population of about seven hundred, and was described by General Louis Milfort in his *Mémoires*,⁶⁵ as follows:

A small earthly paradise where the inhabitants—there were only forty land owners—while not rich were perfectly happy. Hunting and fishing were abundant, fruits and vegetables as good as in Europe. So plentiful were water-fowl that loaded guns were kept behind the doors. Drinking water was brought from a stream about a league away. Naval stores made an important industry. Tar was run off in ditches from pitch pine and turpentine obtained by cutting a sloping hole in the tree about a foot from the ground, with a vessel below to catch the sap.

One of Don Pedro's first official acts as Commandant of Mobile was to send Mademoiselle Ducré back to New Orleans. She had caused a scandal in that peaceful little place by living with Don Lorenzo Chouriac, chief guard of the royal warehouse in Mobile, who was prohibited from accompanying her to New Orleans.⁶⁶

Culminating a romance dating from the time when Don Pedro was Commandant at Baton Rouge and his duty took him on occasion to nearby Pointe Coupée, where he met Dona Francesca Gerard, Don Pedro petitioned the King, December 7, 1783, for permission to marry her. She was the handsome daughter of Enrique Gerard, surgeon at Pointe Coupée, and after the death of her parents, she had continued to live with her maternal grandfather, François Allain, the former commandant. The petition was accompanied by a document of fifty-four pages⁶⁷ which had been two years in preparation to show that Dona Francesca possessed all the qualifications required by the ordinances of the King for the wife of a Spanish officer. The petition was endorsed by Governor Miro, who added in his own hand that he considered this officer very deserving of the consideration of the King. The marriage contract⁶⁸ was executed December 11, 1784, after receiving the royal consent. But this must have been regarded as rather perfunctory red-tape, since the impatient lovers had solemnized their marriage in church, soon after loyally sending their petition to His Majesty.

⁶⁵ General Louis Milfort, *Mémoire ou Coup d'Oeil Rapide sur mes Differents Voyages et mon Séjour dans le Nation Creek* (Paris, 1802), 52-57, (W.P.A. translations, 25-28).

⁶⁶ Doc. R-181, Letter from Grimarest to Favrot, dated February 28, 1784, *Favrot Papers*, III, 37.

⁶⁷ Doc. R-167, dated December 20, 1781, *ibid.*, II, 130.

⁶⁸ Doc. R-188, dated December 11, 1784, *ibid.*, III, 41.

Grimarest not recovering promptly from his illness, on June 28, 1784, Don Pedro was given full command of Mobile.⁶⁹

The chief duty of the commandant of the Post of Mobile at this time was to maintain peace and friendly relations with the Indians. In this Don Pedro was eminently successful, conducting his negotiations with the Indians through Alexander McGillivray, whom Pickett called "the Talleyrand of Alabama." According to Gayarré,

McGillivray was one of those interesting characters who have now become so scarce, and who, in the early days of the history of America, presented in their persons the curious spectacle of the combined qualities and defects of the wild Indian and the educated white man of the Caucasian race—what is called a half-breed—a compound of night and day—a moral, intellectual, and physical twilight—the blending of colors and races—the offspring of the embraces of civilization and barbarism—the embodiment of the spirit of the wilderness still retaining its nature and propensities, although somewhat tamed and refined by the tuition of morality, the revelations of religion, and the soothing influence of the arts and sciences.

Another remarkable man, John Linder, whom Don Pedro appointed civil agent of the District of the Tensas, September 15, 1785,⁷⁰ assisted in keeping order in the territory. Captain Linder was a native of the Canton of Berne, Switzerland, who lived for many years in Charleston as a British engineer and surveyor. There he had become acquainted with McGillivray who, at the time of the American Revolution, was instrumental in bringing Linder with his family and Negro slaves to the Tensas settlement near Mobile.

Among minor matters handled by Don Pedro as commandant at Mobile were the following: assisting Governor O'Neill of Pensacola to purchase cattle to supply his post with meat until the Indians could bring in venison;⁷¹ collecting some money owed Pedro Bay, a free man of color, by a resident of Mobile;⁷² ordering the arrest of William Drue, the leader of a gang of ruffians who were riding up and down the Tensas country, pillaging homes, stealing wearing apparel, saddles, bridles, horses and firearms, capturing and killing slaves, tearing down fences, and

⁶⁹ Doc. R-185, dated June 28, 1784, *ibid.*, III, 39.

⁷⁰ Doc. R-196A, *ibid.*, III, 56.

⁷¹ Doc. R-198, Letter from O'Neill to Favrot, dated October 5, 1785, *ibid.*, III, 58.

⁷² Doc. R-199, dated October 17, 1785, *ibid.*, III, 59.

destroying crops;⁷³ having runaway slaves captured and returned to their owners; taking measures to prevent the spread of rabies in his territory;⁷⁴ and fixing prices and regulating the sale of merchandise to the Indians.

With all this, he had leisure to take part in the social life of the community, to send gifts as varied as a bear, novels, papers and songs to friends; to assist the royal storekeeper, Miguel Eslava; and to write many personal letters to his friend, Governor Miro, who was the godfather of Don Pedro's oldest son, Luis Estevan. Miro's wife, Celeste, was the daughter of Macarty Mactigue, who had been commandant of the Illinois, in those days of Don Pedro's boyhood when Claude Joseph was often sent from Fort Chartres on convoying and scouting expeditions.

A census of Mobile, Pascagoula, Bay St. Louis and the Tensas and Tombigbee districts was completed by Don Pedro on January 1, 1787.⁷⁵ It showed a total population of 1230 persons, 62 plantations, 491 horses, 3638 cattle; and the production of 3770 hogsheads of tobacco, 12,306 barrels of corn and 146 barrels of rice.

His opinion of the relative efficiency of the French and Spanish colonial administrations under which he had served, may be inferred from the following extract from General Milfort's *Memoires*:

I remained a few days at Mobile. There is a fort in that city built of bricks. The fort and the city were commanded (1784-1787) by a French Creole named Favrot, in the service of the King of Spain. I went to visit him and when he learned that I was French, he showed me a great friendship and made me promise to come back and see him during my sojourn.

One day as we were out for a walk on our way to visit the fort, we passed on a sort of bridge made of a single board about fifteen feet long and three in width that had been thrown across a ravine. He made me notice this bridge, saying it had been put there by the French government. He asked me how much I thought it cost the French. Seeing my embarrassment, he said, "This bridge cost the French 30,000 francs, and since I am here I have had it repaired

⁷³ Doc. R-201, dated November 27, 1785, *ibid.*, III, 61.

⁷⁴ Doc. R-204C, dated May 11, 1786, *ibid.*, III, 69.

⁷⁵ Doc. R-212, dated January 1, 1787, *ibid.*, III, 82.

twice with no cost to the King of Spain. The fort that we are going to visit was paid for by the French and cost enormous sums, and it's good for nothing. A four-inch cannon would raze it in two hours."⁷⁶

Don Pedro liked Mobile so much that he desired to remain in command there. Governor Miro, although especially friendly toward him, wrote on May 11, 1786, that he was always disposed to assist him but that he must be patient; that he had been given command of posts when others, Perez, Pena and Villere, had asked favors that could not be granted.⁷⁷

When rumors reached Mobile that Don Pedro was likely to be removed from the command there, fourteen of the leading citizens addressed a petition to the Governor, stating their great satisfaction with the command of Don Pedro, citing proofs of his fairness and justice, praising the manner in which he had been able to keep the savages quiet and contented, which was essential to the peace and safety of their homes, and praying the Governor to continue Don Pedro in command there.⁷⁸ This was followed by another petition signed by sixty-two residents of the Tensas and Tombigbee districts in behalf of Don Pedro,⁷⁹ but in spite of all this, the following June, Don Vizente Folch arrived with authority from Miro to relieve Don Pedro of his command.⁸⁰ The usual inventories were made and the command of the Post of Mobile was delivered to Folch on June 28, 1787.

VII. DIVIDED LOYALTIES

A quiet interlude of five years in New Orleans now fell to Don Pedro's lot, and during this time he rebuilt his property which had been partially destroyed in the fire of 1788, and bought more slaves.

This was all interrupted, however, when he was ordered to take command of the troops of the Regiment of Louisiana, garrisoned at Natchez, and leave by barge, August 6, 1792.⁸¹ After returning to New Orleans to spend the Christmas holidays with his family, he returned with them in a boat of eighteen oars to Natchez, January 6, 1793. He kept a complete journal of

⁷⁶ See footnote 65, above.

⁷⁷ See footnote 74, above.

⁷⁸ Doc. R-209, dated November 30, 1786, *Favrot Papers*, III, 81

⁷⁹ Doc. R-216, dated January 15, 1787, *ibid.*, III, 86.

⁸⁰ Doc. R-225, dated June 11, 1787, *ibid.*, III, 100.

⁸¹ Doc. R-248A, dated August 6, 1792, *ibid.*, III, 142.

the trip, giving all the crossings, points, bends, islands, landings, weather conditions, plantations viewed, where night stops were made, and the estimated distance covered each day.⁸²

Boats ascending the Mississippi at that time were not only obliged to ply along the shore, where the current was less rapid and where counter currents or eddies were frequently found, but they also found it necessary to keep on the inside shore of the bends in the river. Therefore, they would cross the river at the lower extremity of every bend. It was said by old boatmen that they were obliged to cross the Mississippi three hundred and ninety times in going from New Orleans to St. Louis. Don Pedro, according to his Journal, found it necessary to make forty-two crossings in going from New Orleans to Natchez, a distance which he estimated to be ninety-six and one-half leagues.

Two days after arriving at Natchez, February 3, he was placed in command of the troops garrisoned there by Governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, governor of the district, succeeding his good friend, Don Carlos de Grand-Pré, lieutenant-colonel in the Regiment of Louisiana.

Don Pedro was not well received at his new post. Gayoso had been told that he had made disparaging remarks about him, which he resented. Don Francisco Boulingny,⁸³ colonel of the Regiment, wrote several letters from New Orleans regarding the matter and succeeded in bringing about more cordial relations between the two.

About this time, the command of the Post of the Arkansas, where Don Pedro had seen his first actual military service, became vacant through the resignation of Chalmette. Don Pedro wanted this command and Boulingny tried to get it for him,⁸⁴ but it was given to Valliere instead. To add to this disappointment, Don Pedro became ill soon after arriving at Natchez and had to submit to an operation.

The threat of war between Spain and the United States having subsided, plans were made for reducing the garrisons at

⁸² Doc. R-252, January 6 to February 3, 1793, *ibid.*, IV, 2.

⁸³ Don Francisco Boulingny, son of Joseph Boulingny of Milan and Marie Pared of Marseilles, was born in Alicante in 1735. He entered the Spanish army, serving two years in the infantry regiment of Zamora, then nearly two years in the Royal Guards. In 1762 he went to Havana where he remained seven years. He came to Louisiana with O'Reilly, as Aide-de-Camp, in 1769. Boulingny rose to the rank of Colonel and served with Galvez at the capture of Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. He was acting governor in 1784, during Miro's absence, and in 1799, as senior military officer, he was military administrator following Gayoso's sudden death. He died in 1802, ending a highly honorable and distinguished career.

⁸⁴ Doc. R-254, dated March 8, 1793, *Favrot Papers*, IV, 8.

all the posts in Louisiana, and it was decided to reduce the garrison at Natchez to two companies of fifty-five men each, and the company of grenadiers garrisoned there was to be returned to New Orleans. As Don Pedro had never been satisfied at Natchez, Grand-Pré was sent back to relieve him in April, 1794.

This is what appeared on the surface, but there were seething under-currents. Don Pedro, like most other French Creoles in Louisiana, was greatly affected sentimentally by the arrival at this time in the United States of Charles Edmond Genet, better known in America as "Citizen" Genet, as envoy from the revolutionary government of France. In the treaty of alliance with the King of France in February, 1778, the United States had pledged help in the defense of his Majesty's West India possessions and under this treaty, Genet claimed the assistance of the United States. As, however, the royal government with which the treaty had been made had been overthrown, the French Republic was waging a war of aggression rather than one of defense, and under these circumstances Washington and his advisers decided that the treaty was not binding, and a proclamation of neutrality was issued.

The friendliness of the American people to France was so warm that neutrality was difficult to maintain, however, and Genet, misled by the enthusiasm of his reception, thought the people would overrule their government and allow him to push them into war. About 150 citizens of Louisiana had petitioned the French Republic to be taken under its protection. This, with the fact that the westerners were dissatisfied with the attitude of Spain regarding navigation of the Mississippi River, led Genet to entertain the old dream of Miro of separating Kentucky and Tennessee from the rest of the United States, and for that purpose he sent agents among the residents of that section to point out the advantages that would come to them by helping him invade Louisiana, overthrow the Spanish authority there, and form an alliance under the protectorate of France. Chief among these agents was Auguste La Chaise, a native of Louisiana, whose grandfather had come to the colony in 1723 as royal treasurer. Genet was unsuccessful in all his schemes and his influence was so disturbing that very soon the government of the United States demanded his recall.

In this conspiracy, according to certain documents which came into the possession of Governor Carondelet, George Rogers Clark, as field marshal of the French Armies and Commander-in-Chief of the French Revolutionary Legions on the Mississippi, issued at Cincinnati on January 25, 1794, a "proposition for the recruiting of volunteers in order to reduce the Spanish Posts of the Mississippi so as to open the navigation and commerce of the said river and to liberate its inhabitants." He offered large rewards of land, depending upon length of service.⁸⁵

Carondelet, Governor Miro's successor, referred a copy of this "Proposition" to his brother-in-law, Luis de las Casas, captain-general at Havana, of Cuba, Louisiana and the Floridas, on April 7, in order that "your Excellency may be acquainted with the weakness and apathy of the American government."⁸⁶

Gayoso, in a confidential memorandum⁸⁷ to Carondelet, dated March 13, 1794, reported from Natchez, regarding a lengthy statement of one Juan Pedro Pisgignoux, which claimed that all the merchants of New Orleans were patriots and for the Republic at heart. He stated that, "It is a well known fact that Favrot is recognized as a patriot and that it had been arranged that when the expedition passes Natchez they will shout 'Favrot, do not defend yourself as we know you to be a patriot, therefore we will not harm you.'" He stated that all the persons known as aristocrats were known as patriots, with a very few exceptions.

Carondelet immediately wrote las Casas,⁸⁸ enclosing Gayoso's report and adding, "Regarding Don Pedro Favrot, an old captain of this regiment, I shall see that he is detailed to this city (New Orleans), using an illness of which he is suffering, as a pretext. I shall replace him with Don Carlos Grand-Pré."

There is no evidence that Don Pedro deviated from his duties as a Spanish officer, by any questionable actions, but there is little doubt of his inner feelings, if one may judge from two unsigned and apparently unposted letters in his own handwriting to be found among his papers.

⁸⁵ W.P.A. translations of Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Cuba ("Despatches of the Spanish Governors, 1793-1796"), Legajo 1447, letter No. 110.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, letter No. 108.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, letter No. 106.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, letter dated March 20, 1794. For further interesting data on this subject see letters 107, 112, 114. Carondelet finally wrote las Casas that "the downfall of Genet and the shortage of money seems to have destroyed the bad disposition of the inhabitants of Kentucky, Cumberland, and other settlements."

Perhaps this was the one time in his life that he felt the overwhelming urge of the diarist to reveal himself, that actuated Pepys. The conflict of loyalties between his French blood and his allegiance to Spain must have brought on a spiritual crisis, the more tumultuous for having to be hidden. The only eyes other than Don Pedro's to read these letters were those of the two men to whom they were addressed and if, as one conjectures, they were never posted, their contents were never revealed even to Carondelet, with whom Don Pedro was a little later to have the closest of personal contacts, or to Citizen Genet, whose path never crossed his. For one hundred and fifty years, Don Pedro's troubled heart kept its tragic secret.

The letter to Carondelet voices many criticisms of his policies, including the erection of forts surrounding New Orleans for the obvious purpose of intimidating the citizens rather than for outside protection, and defends the necessity for anonymity:

. . . let us examine these works, happily undertaken, these canals opened or proposed, this prodigious trade that is certain to enrich the city; where shall we find all this? In your letter, Sir, and in the useless records of the T and C. As to works; are there others besides the fortifications, daily object of your condescending care, and the terror of the Colonists? Are there others about to be undertaken? This explanation seems somewhat far-fetched; however, I see no other. Oh! sir, raze these ramparts, demolish the Fort St. Charles, which even now causes the citizens to tremble; destroy these redoubts that threaten only the city and which you have built in part at the expense of the residents. . . .

. . . get rid of all these disturbers who are the only enemies of the Colony; stop speaking to us of intrigues and conspiracies. If they exist, uncover them and punish accordingly. . . .

The removal of public enemies, the proximity of honest persons will work miracles, harmony will reign everywhere. . . .

Then, Sir, things will appear in a different light to you, you will then see the Colony in its true aspect, you will see her loyal from the day of her re-annexation by Spain, taking up arms with as much pride as success under General Galvez, contributing more, perhaps, than any other colony to the progress of Spanish exploits; you will see her, even under your administration, always peaceable, notwithstanding the fact that they have been unceasingly represented as violent;

innocent, though continually accused; their behavior always characterized by temperance, and wisdom everywhere removing the suspicions cast upon her and upon her governor. . . .

Perhaps you will hear grumblings at the delays and difficulties experienced in the demands which the pressing needs force us to make, but as soon as you listen to them favorably, you will see them again peaceful and accepting as favors that which justice exacts of you. Then, Sir, you will perceive that such a colony should not be accused and suspected unceasingly, and if she cannot obtain the friendship of her Governor, she can at least aspire to his esteem.

Here I wrap myself in mystery, your numerous eyes of Argus will no doubt discover my identity, it matters little to me. If I have succeeded in accomplishing my purpose, which is to inform you that your justification is not complete, that the steps you have taken are somewhat late in quieting the minds and have not effected a reconciliation; that in order to do this, your conduct must be sustained; that your principles of benevolence must be unequivocal, then only will harmony be re-established and my desires fulfilled.

I could, perhaps, have told you orally what I have written here, but in these embarrassing conferences, surrounded by guards, under this administration where everything inspires fear, and nothing inspires confidence, truth expires on the lips; if it be sometimes spoken, it is in fear and with reservations. A word from you seals the lips. In silence alone can it dare appear and produce its effects.

I have the honor.⁸⁹

(Unsigned)

The letter to "Citizen Ge" welcomes him to this country and says in part:

Citizen Ge:

You arrive in a Colony inhabited by Frenchmen like yourself, the same blood flows through their veins, the same spirit moves them. Long separated from their Mother-Country, they lament their isolation in secret. Their eyes are constantly fixed on her, although she seems to have forsaken them. They follow her in her campaigns and in silence they rejoice in her victories, and notwithstanding all indications to the contrary, they dare to hope that one day they shall return. . . .

It is under such conditions, Citizen General, that you are coming to organize this colony, re-unite the good-will of the people. . . . And if for one moment, one cf our country-

⁸⁹ Doc. R-272B, date 1794, *Favrot Papers*, IV, 42.

men forgot that he was a Frenchman, remorse will punish him enough for his error. We shall be as we were once, before the coming of foreign domination, all relatives and friends. Those of Europe and those of America will glory equally in the name of Frenchmen, and will recognize the obligations which so beautiful a title imposes.

Greetings and profound respect.⁹⁰

It is not unlikely that Don Pedro felt in an anomalous position at Natchez and was eager to be relieved of this command.

Again in New Orleans, Don Pedro was commissioned a lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Armies and Captain of Grenadiers by the King, September 4, 1795; this making him third in seniority, Don Carlos de Grand-Pré being first and Don Juan De la Villebrevue second.⁹¹

VIII. THE PLAQUEMINES AND RIVER TRAFFIC

The next year Don Pedro was given command of the Post of the Plaquemines, relieving Don Antonio de San Maxent, retired captain of the army, a post which Don Pedro was to command, with only one short interruption, until December 7, 1803, when he turned it over to representatives of the French Republic.

The vital importance of the Post of Plaquemines at this time can hardly be overestimated. Its jurisdiction, civil and military, extended on both sides of the river from the Balize to Pointe-à-la-Hache. Prior to 1795, Spain had kept the mouth of the river closed to all save Spanish vessels and a few other privileged ships. Only a few months before Don Pedro was assigned to Fort San Felipe, Spain and the United States had signed a treaty providing unhampered passage of American craft, and this opening of the long-restricted Mississippi to all navigation and commerce marked the first step in the emergence of New Orleans as a world port. Don Pedro's official letters to Don Juan Ronquillo, chief pilot at the Balize, show the active part he took in regulating the rapidly increasing flow of traffic in and out of the river.

Instructions on August 1, 1796, from the Baron de Carondelet, show that Don Pedro's authority as Political and Military Commandant of the Post of Plaquemines extended not only over the

⁹⁰ Doc. R-272A, date 1794, *ibid.*, IV, 41.

⁹¹ Docs. R-276 and R-294A, *ibid.*, IV, 51; V, 45.

usual garrison matters, but that he was responsible for the regulating of traffic and commerce on the river. This "regulating of commerce" included such routine matters as the treatment of cases of epidemic on vessels, procedure as to passports applying to all war and merchant vessels passing Fort San Felipe, monthly inspection of the Belize, and that "Ships carrying personal letters for individuals shall deliver them to the commandant, who will enclose them in a sealed package and hand them to the captain, if the wind is favorable, with orders to deliver them to the government; if the wind is unfavorable, the commandant will forward them at the first and best opportunity offered."⁹² Corsairs and their prizes gave Don Pedro considerable annoyance, and American vessels frequently proved an irritation because they expected special privileges.

During these years there was a great amount of sickness in the Plaquemines as well as in New Orleans. Carondelet did his best to provide the post with a skilled surgeon. In September of this year, Don Pedro wrote Ronquillo at the Belize that he had heard rumors of a pestilence called "yellow fever" in New York, and for him to quarantine all persons who arrived with any signs of illness, in Pass-à-Loutre for twenty days before permitting them to come up the river.⁹³

As soon as he took command at the Plaquemines, Don Pedro began rebuilding Fort San Felipe, and he personally selected the site for Fort Bourbon and began its erection on the opposite bank of the river, under the direction of Governor Carondelet who made several trips of inspection.

Madame Favrot and the children had remained in New Orleans, thinking the new command was a temporary one, as San Maxent, the former commandant, was eager to return; but finally the command was definitely settled in favor of Don Pedro and Carondelet sent the family down on the King's galley, *La Leal*, October 16,⁹⁴ to join him at Fort San Felipe.

A declaration of war with England was momentarily expected, hostilities had already been begun and it was feared that an attack might be made on the Belize. Fort Bourbon was finally completed in June, 1797, and all the defenses of Fort San Felipe

⁹² Doc. R-292, dated August 1, 1796. *ibid.*, V, 1.

⁹³ Doc. R-288, Official Letter Book, dates July 21 to November 6, 1796, *ibid.*, IV, 93.

⁹⁴ Doc. M-40, dated October 15, 1796, *ibid.*, V, 30.

were being strengthened. Carondelet wrote Don Pedro almost daily and frequently visited him at Fort San Felipe. In anticipation of one of his first visits, Carondelet wrote Don Pedro: "Do not prepare any extras for me when I come down, for I eat only boiled chicken and a piece of roast beef at noon; at night, the wing of a chicken. But I will ask for some good milk in the morning and at night upon retiring; this diet agrees very well with me."⁹⁵

Hunting from time to time enlivened the routine of duties. In December, Don Pedro sent Carondelet two quarters of venison which he had killed on one of his hunting trips. At the same time he sent the Governor some oysters and redfish, all of which Carondelet said "tasted very good, especially the oysters which were saltier than usual."⁹⁶

Carondelet wrote Don Pedro in March that he had received unofficial word of his appointment as Governor-General of the Kingdom of Quito, and that before leaving he would recommend Don Pedro highly to his successor, Gayoso.⁹⁷ On August 7, Gayoso wrote that he had succeeded Carondelet as Governor and that the latter had spoken of Don Pedro in the highest terms. Since he had full confidence in the Baron's judgment, he promised to continue his policies with reference to the military officials.⁹⁸

A hospitable bustle enlivened Fort San Felipe in the early days of September when the baron and his party stopped there on their way to Quito. "To say good-bye, is to die a little," and there must have been more than perfunctory regret at the parting of Carondelet and Don Pedro. Their close contact had given each a higher opinion of the other's worth; both had foreseen the mighty river traffic of the Mississippi. Carondelet had risked his career to protect the commerce of Louisiana against the unwise policy of the Spanish court, and in Don Pedro he had found an eager and conscientious subordinate.

On the thirteenth, Carondelet wrote from the Belize to thank Don Pedro for all the attentions his party had been shown at Fort San Felipe, and the party being detained by unfavorable weather for several days, he again wrote on the eighteenth, asking for a dozen hens, some eggs, and several pounds of coffee.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Doc. M-45, dated November 30, 1796, *ibid.*, V, 37.

⁹⁶ Doc. M-46, dated December 15, 1796, *ibid.*, V, 38.

⁹⁷ Doc. M-57, dated March 12, 1797, *ibid.*, V, 69.

⁹⁸ Doc. M-74, dated August 7, 1797, *ibid.*, V, 92.

⁹⁹ Doc. M-77, dated September 18, 1797, *ibid.*, V, 96.

Six months later there was another flurry of excitement at the Post of the Plaquemines when royal visitors in the persons of the Duke of Orleans and his brothers, the Duke of Montpensier and the Count of Beaujolais, accompanied by the Marquis of Montjoye, passed through on their way from New Orleans to Havana. Gayoso accompanied the royal visitors on their way as far as the Balize, writing Don Pedro a personal letter from there.¹⁰⁰

That Gayoso by this time had a good opinion of Don Pedro on his own account, is proved by a letter written several months later declaring that he was extremely well satisfied with the painstaking care and zeal with which Don Pedro had managed his garrison and which had resulted in the good discipline and health of the men under him.¹⁰¹

It is fairly evident that the strategic importance of Don Pedro's command at the Plaquemines did not compensate his family for the isolation it entailed. In 1798, the children consisted of: Josephine, affectionately known as "Phine", twelve years old; Luis, ten; Philogene, seven; Octavine, three; another son, Bouvier, was born the next year; and the youngest child, Pulcherie, was born in 1803.

To relieve the tedium of this lonely "swamp-ridden outpost of Spain's far-flung empire" and to instruct his sons, Don Pedro prepared in his own hand during the summer of 1798, "A textbook in Arithmetic by Questions and Answers and a Summary of the Sciences, made at Fort San Felipe of the Plaquemines¹⁰² for Don Luis de Favrot, and to serve for his brother, Don Philogene, if he is willing to apply himself."

Quaint as is the little textbook, its pedagogy is as sound today as the day it was penned. Changes in world politics and advances in astronomy would, of course, necessitate a few corrections, but not many. The lucid questions and answers were absorbed readily enough by both boys, forming foundations for their later judicial careers when each served in turn as judge of the Parish of West Baton Rouge.

The dedication reads: "My dear Son: Remember the prayer that is made to you by your loving father—which prayer is that

¹⁰⁰ Docs. R-302A, M-79, M-80, *ibid.*, V, 103, 105.

¹⁰¹ Doc. M-83, dated September 4, 1798, *ibid.*, V, 123.

¹⁰² Doc. R-312A, dated December 1798, Textbook, unpublished Favrot Papers.

you apply yourself to learn by heart the contents of this little book. Be polite and honest. Make yourself loved by everybody. Avoid everywhere bad company."

The contents embrace: Arithmetic, Astronomy, Dancing, Engraving, Fencing, Geography, Grammar, History, Languages, Mechanics, Music, Optics, Statics, and the Conduct of a Wise Man.

A random excerpt from the study of *Languages* is typical:

Question. What is the origin of the number and diversity of languages?

Answer. The building of the Tower of Babel. Genesis I.

Question. Which are the most widely spoken and used languages in the world today?

Answer. There are ten of them: Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, English, German, Russian, Arabic and Persian. The Latin language is absolutely necessary to a person of good culture, to all scholars and to the clergy. The French language is necessary to everybody because there are few countries in Europe where it is not spoken, both among the people of culture and among the tradesmen, not to mention the great number of good books written in this language. The English language is necessary to those who want to acquire knowledge by reading excellent books of philosophy, mathematics, navigation, history and poetry; in one word, of all the sciences and arts which are written in this language.

Question. Which is the most difficult of all the languages?

Answer. Chinese. It has only about 335 words, which are all of one syllable, but which have five different sounds each, so that each word can have five different meanings. These serve as 1,675 words. The Chinese use with these words more than 80,000 different characters and this makes this language the most difficult of all those spoken throughout the world.

There follows a study of the representation of language, various alphabets, vowels, consonants, syllables and monosyllables. The example for the last is: "*Dieu voit tout*" (God sees all).

The closing pages on "The Conduct of a Wise Man" is reminiscent of the advice of Polonius to his son, although Don Pedro has a less worldly approach, as a few excerpts will serve to show:

My son: Love always without selfishness. Forgive without weakness. If it is necessary to submit, do so without servility. . . . Do not go to law. Be sympathetic always with the misfortunes of others. Be tolerant with the faults of others, and be a faithful friend always. . . . Do not be oppressive with your poor debtors. . . . Do not be curious about the affairs of others and keep your own affairs hidden without affectation. . . . Do not be puffed up with your fortunate talents. . . . Do not pretend to show too much intelligence. . . . It is religion that determines our duties toward God; the civil laws determine our duties toward the state and the sovereign; it is the natural law that determines our duties toward individuals and society. The duties of children toward their fathers and mothers are: obedience, submission, respect, love and gratitude. The duties of friendship are: confidence, good-will, and good council. The duties of fathers and mothers are: instruction, education and tenderness for their children. Generosity is the sacrifice of personal interest in behalf of others; it is consideration that creates it. Generosity is praiseworthy only when it does not show ostentation.

Madame Favrot must have been a no less conscientious tutor of her daughters during these days, for three years later Josephine writes the following letter, which would do credit to any fifteen-year-old girl, and which gives an inimitable picture of how a spirited girl reacted to the boredom of this remote outpost. It is to Helene Grand-Pré, the daughter of her father's dear friend, Don Carlos de Grand-Pré.

I have just received, dear and tender friend, your letter of the fifth instant. I read it three times in succession, it gave me so much pleasure. I am surprised that you had not received the letter that I wrote you, as well as Celeste, when I received your letter before the last. . . .

Since the day I wrote to Celeste, I have had no fever, but as it is customary in this miserable post, whenever one has fever she is immediately shut up. . . . I need a great deal of exercise and it is not possible to get any here. Sometimes I go in the launch for a league to the plantation of the store-keeper, sometimes I go to Fort Bourbon on the other side, but sitting in a launch or on a chair in the house is about the same thing and does not provide any exercise. . . .

I used to go almost every evening at sunset to take a walk in the garden, rather from a sense of duty than for pleasure because before going out of the fort I knew what there was for me to see; it is always the same walk, always the same tedious straight line of the levee that one must follow, and it is necessary to walk straight because if you make a false step to the left you will fall into the grasses, if you make a false step to the right you will fall into Bayou Mardi Gras. It is true that there is a path through the woods for a distance of one league, but how is one to use it? There are so many mosquitoes that they make you dance all the way. I am writing you by the light of a candle and they drive me mad; there are thousands around me and I cannot form a letter without making one jump. The noise does not frighten them; they are intrepid. If, however, you were here with me to share the pleasure of jumping, I would be only half so bad off. . . .

We go often, Favrot (Luis) and myself, out in a small pirogue that we keep in the moat of the fort, one rowing and the other steering. What a pleasure it would be if you were here with me. . . . We would spend the mornings and evenings on horseback. . . .

We can write each other every eight days. If you are in the city, you can send your letter to Madame Robert who will forward it to me, because the masters of the mail boats never fail to go there. . . .

Embrace for me my dear Celeste; tell her the sorrow her illness has caused me. I hope that at present she is well. None of us has been spared in this miserable place. Papa has recently been very ill with fevers; he is still convalescing. Mama has been quite distressed recently on account of an abscess of the breast; she is not well yet. We came near losing Philogene. Favrot and Octavine have also been sick. If you could see poor little Bouvier, it would fill you with pity; so much has he been tormented by abscesses and carbuncles, especially on his face and head, so that it was necessary to cut his beautiful curly hair which was so becoming. . . .

Adieu, my dear Helene, always love your best friend and believe that she has given to you her attachment for life. Give my caresses to your little brothers and particularly to the dear little Eulalie. You will find herein enclosed a small box that I have made for her; give it to her for me and tell her that it is to induce her to be good and not to torment you when you are writing me.

Goodness me, how long this letter is! I am ashamed to send it to you. On opening it you will think that it is your trial proceedings. My fingers are so tired that I cannot open

my hand. You will have enough for two days reading, but yours, which was not half so long gave me so much pleasure that I hope this one will give you as much. Excuse my scribbling; this will not be the first one that you have had to decipher.

(Paragraph:) Josephine Favrot¹⁰³

Madame Favrot adds the following postscript:

Your friendship with my daughter, fair Helene and charming Celeste, gives me too much pleasure not to encourage you to keep it up by regular correspondence, which might compensate in some manner for the distance between you. Keep for her always the sentiments that you now have; I assure you of the feelings she has for you which will never change.

I was sorry to hear about the illness of the interesting Celeste and I hope it has had no bad after-effects. I appreciate your remembrance and embrace both of you. Assure your father of my compliments. Embrace for me your dear little sister and all your little brothers. Believe me among the number of your most sincere friends.

(Signed:) G.[erard] de Favrot

September 16, 1801.

IX. THE COMING OF LAUSSAT

Four months before Governor Gayoso died of yellow fever on July 18, 1799, Don Pedro was relieved of his command for a year. Francisco Boulogny took over the military affairs of the province, while Nicolas Maria Vidal administered the civil, during the interim until the Marquis de Someruelos, Captain-General of Cuba and Louisiana, could send a successor, the Marquis de Casa Calvo, to take charge of Louisiana.

Immediately on the arrival of Casa Calvo in New Orleans, Don Pedro wrote him from Baton Rouge, where he was serving temporarily under Grand-Pré, offering his services and pledging loyalty to the new administration. Casa Calvo answered immediately, promising Don Pedro his wholehearted support.¹⁰⁴

Don Pedro had gone to Baton Rouge on the understanding that he would succeed Grand-Pré, who was to be promoted to another position in the near future, and with that in mind, he

¹⁰³ Doc. R-356L, dated September 18, 1801, *Favrot Papers*, VI, 125. A memorandum by Octavine Favrot (S-35, August 25, 1867) states that this letter was found among those of a friend, and states that they had become accustomed to the fort and even learned to love it as the domain of their father; and that the day the post was delivered to the French was one of agitation, emotion, and grief.

¹⁰⁴ Doc. M-86, dated September 17, 1799, *Favrot Papers*, VI, 59.

purchased a plantation on the west side of the river, a few miles above Baton Rouge, from Alexandre Patin for three thousand pesos. This purchase included besides the land, all the buildings, a pair of oxen, a wagon, a plow, two horses, two cows and a calf, six ewes and a ram, six sows and a boar, and one hundred empty barrels.¹⁰⁵

These plans, for a plantation life, however, were upset by an order from Casa Calvo for Don Pedro to report to New Orleans immediately to take command again of the Post of the Plaque-mines.¹⁰⁶

By the first of the year, 1803, it had become apparent that Louisiana would be retroceded to France, and Don Pedro filed a petition to the King for a leave of absence for two years with the same salary he was then receiving, in order that he might sell his property, collect the money due him from certain residents of the colony, and thereby protect his estate, consisting of lands, slaves, etc., all of which, he thought, would be unfavorably affected by the retrocession. In the same petition¹⁰⁷ he asked for a leave of absence for his son, Don Luis, a cadet in the same corps, who was too young, at fifteen, to remain in active service without the guidance of his father.

Pierre Clement de Laussat, Colonial Prefect of Louisiana and commissioner to receive the transfer of that colony from the Spanish authorities in accordance with the treaty of San Ildefonso, arrived at the Balize on March 17, 1803, aboard the French brig, *Le Surveillant*. He dispatched a courier to Fort San Felipe with a letter to Don Pedro, and dispatches brought over for Governor Salcedo, with the request that Don Pedro furnish the courier with the most expeditious means by which he could reach New Orleans.¹⁰⁸ He forwarded also a letter that had been given him by Pontalba for Don Pedro.

Don Pedro immediately sent Don Martin Duplessis to conduct the courier to New Orleans and at the same time sent an invitation to Laussat to come to his house for a few days' rest. With the invitation, he sent some fresh provisions and some cakes and apples in an Indian basket.

¹⁰⁵ A part of this plantation, given Luis in 1819 and upon which his son (H. Mortimer) built a home in 1837, now known as Monte Vista, remained in the family for over one hundred and twenty years, when it was sold to Horace Wilkinson, a descendant of General James Wilkinson.

¹⁰⁶ Doc. R-336, dated October 5, 1800, *Favrot Papers*, VI, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Doc. R-402, dated January 29, 1803, *ibid.*, VI, 83.

¹⁰⁸ Doc. S-11B, dated March 19, 1803, *ibid.*, VI, 94.

Laussat replied, thanking Don Pedro for his invitation and the gifts; telling of his trip and his plans for Louisiana; saying that Pontalba had spoken of him as "one of his most respectable friends"—and declaring that he considered it a good omen that one of the first Louisianians he was to meet and become acquainted with was to be Don Pedro.¹⁰⁹

Le Surveillant dropped anchor opposite Fort San Felipe on the twenty-fourth, and Laussat went ashore with his family. He recounts it thus in his *Memoires*:

Monsieur Favrot, an old Frenchman and a loyal military officer surrounded by his family, greeted us; he was full of candor and hospitality; at seeing us, an expression of happiness spread over the features of this good man. We inspected and wandered over every part of the fort.

Plaquemines is like an island in the midst of marshlands. One is eaten alive by red bugs, mosquitoes and gnats. The garrison has to be changed quite often. Eighteen iron cannon and a bastion constitute the entire defences of the place. The commandant and the soldiers maintain a vegetable garden where they struggle continually against flood waters, weeds and insects. The house of the commandant is fairly comfortable. Opposite, on the other side of the river, is Fort Bourbon, armed with a few iron cannon, their fire being arranged to cross that of Fort Saint Philip.

We partook of an excellent dinner, one full of gaiety. We drank toasts without number to the accompaniment of salvos of artillery, singing French songs with recurring refrains, expressing in their choruses the pleasures of wine and love. We were given a good sample of life as it is lived in the Colonies.¹¹⁰

Small wonder the old Frenchman was happy. As a contemporary commentator puts its:

The latest of generations of French officers, he and his father had participated in every important campaign since the coming of Bienville. They had built, remodeled, commanded or inhabited practically every fort of consequence from Chartres and Duquesne in the north to Belize in the south, from Natchitoches in the west to Mobile in the east. First under the lilies of France, and finally in the service of Spain, he had seen the Indians pushed gradually backwards and had fought for or against the mightiest powers of an age when high adventure was the order of the day. He had

¹⁰⁹ Doc. R-405A, dated March 22, 1808, *ibid.*, VI, 96.

¹¹⁰ Pierre Clement de Laussat, *Memorie sur ma vie, à mon fils* (Paris, 1831), I, 26.

seen an empire, built upon the courage, tenacity and vision of Champlain, La Salle, Marquette, Frontenac, Henri de Tonti and the indomitable will and steadfastness of Iberville, Bienville, St. Denis, the D'Artaguette, the Le Moyne family, Cadillac, Boisbriant—and the matchless faith of the Jesuits, Charlevoix, Gravier and others—disintegrate, the result of the cumulative neglect of a profligate court and monarchs to whom they had given the fullest measure of loyalty and devotion. In all of history, there has been no other such drama, capped as it was with such a tragic climax. Napoleon at last sent new hope, and Laussat was his messenger. They would again all be French.¹¹¹

Unlike the coming of Citizen Genet, with its background of intrigue and conspiracy which threatened war, this transfer from Spain to France held the promise of permanence peacefully attained. It was to be August before either Laussat or Don Pedro would know the truth regarding the transfer in turn from France to the United States.¹¹²

Baton Rouge, it was thought, would not be affected, but would remain under Spanish dominion. Salcedo wrote Don Pedro to this effect in May, adding that the entire regiment of Spanish soldiers would be transferred to Pensacola.¹¹³ The officers of the regiment were to meet at the house of Lieutenant-Colonel Howard the following day to ascertain which ones wanted to enter the service of the French republic.

The King granted Don Pedro and Luis, on June 11, a leave to remain in the province two years, beginning on the day of the transfer of Louisiana to France.¹¹⁴ At the same time Casa Calvo advised Don Pedro to file no petition for retirement until all reports were confirmed.¹¹⁵

The birth of his youngest child, Eulalie Pulcherie, on September 13, gave Don Pedro the best of excuses to visit New Orleans and on the twenty-ninth Salcedo sent Don Ursino Bouligny to relieve him temporarily so that he might see his new daughter.¹¹⁶ During his stay, he received an invitation on October 15 from Laussat to have dinner with him on the following Monday at two o'clock.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ H. Mortimer Favrot, "Colonial Forts of Louisiana," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (1943), 722-754.

¹¹² Doc. S-18, dated August 28, 1803, *Favrot Papers*, VII, 157.

¹¹³ Doc. R-413, dated May 20, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 116.

¹¹⁴ Doc. R-451, dated September 30, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 175.

¹¹⁵ Doc. M-113, dated June 15, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 122.

¹¹⁶ Doc. R-450, dated September 29, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 174.

¹¹⁷ Doc. S-14, dated October 15, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 182.

On December 2, 1803, an official letter from Casa Calvo and Salcedo notified Don Pedro, who had returned to his command of the Plaquemines, that Louisiana had been transferred to France; and ordered him to deliver the Forts of San Felipe, Bourbon and the Belize to Captain Leonard who had been named to take possession of them; and ordered him further to withdraw all his troops and to return to New Orleans immediately after transferring the forts to Leonard, bringing all the archives with him.¹¹⁸

Following is a translation of the procès-verbal¹¹⁹ of the transfer of the Plaquemines to the French Republic:

This day, fifteenth of Frimaire, year twelve of the French Republic (December 7, 1803), at the Fort of Plaquemine at exactly noon.

Leonard, Captain of Frigate, by virtue of the orders which have been transmitted to us by Citizen Laussat, Commissioner of the French Government, under dates of the 9th and 10th of the present month (December 1 and 2) whereby it is ordered that we come to the Fort of Plaquemine and take possession of it and all the lower river from the hands of the Commandant of His Catholic Majesty, in the name of the French Republic, having given us all authority necessary for this purpose, by virtue of authority received from Bonaparte, First Consul.

Consequently, having presented ourselves at the said Fort, accompanied by the militiamen, both from the City and the lower River, by Monsieur Jeantilly (Gentilly), their Captain, by Citizen Olivier, lieutenant of the navy, Leonard Jr., midshipman, and by Citizens Nicolas Roche and Achilles Segur, we have appointed temporarily for the good of the service, the first one (Roche) our lieutenant, the second one (Segur) second lieutenant.

After having presented and exchanged credentials with Monsieur de Favrot, Lieutenant Colonel, Commandant of the said Fort, in the presence of our respective troops, the orders having been read in their presence, the Commandant of His Catholic Majesty ordered his flag to be lowered, accompanied by a salute of artillery, and at the same time he delivered to us the keys of the Fort. Immediately I ordered the flag of the French Republic to be raised, accompanied by a salute of twenty-one guns, repeated by several discharges of musketry fired by the brave militiamen who accompanied us, and with repeated shouts of "Long Live the Republic! Long Live Bonaparte!"

¹¹⁸ Doc. R-463, dated December 2, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 203.

¹¹⁹ Doc. R-464C, dated December 7, 1803, *ibid.*, VII, 206.

At the same time, Citizen Leonard Jr., having been ordered by us to take possession of Fort Bourbon, performed his duty with the same ceremony.

And immediately I sent Citizen Olivier with several militiamen to take possession of the Fort of the Belize.

We have therefore signed, together with our officers herein above named, the official report of the above proceedings, and we have given a copy to the former Commandant of the Fort of His Catholic Majesty, for his discharge towards his government, and we have received a copy signed by him, of the same proceedings.

Done at the Fort of Plaquemine on the year and date above given.

(Signed:) Leonard
Pedro Favrot
A. Segur
Gentilly Dreux, Fils
Leonard, Fils
Roche

The transfer of the Plaquemines to the French Republic, having been completed as above, Don Pedro immediately returned to New Orleans with all his troops and all the archives of Fort San Felipe. He completed inventories¹²⁰ of these archives on March 17 and delivered them to Casa Calvo, April 5, 1804.¹²¹

Four days later, Casa Calvo issued a passport to Don Pedro so that he might leave New Orleans with his family for Baton Rouge, and so ended his active services to His Catholic Majesty.

X. AMERICAN CITIZEN

The old campaigner's dream of retiring to his plantation was about to be realized. His last tie with Spain was to be severed, and for the next twenty years he was to round out his useful life as an American planter, continuing his contact with governmental affairs through his service in the first State Legislature. The military tradition from now on would be carried on by his three sons.

The leave of absence granted Don Pedro in June, 1803, provided that during the two years of this leave he should remain in the province belonging to Spain. When he went to his plantation on the west side of the Mississippi in June, 1804, however, he was no longer in the territory of Spain and Don Vicente Folch,

¹²⁰ Doc. R-473, dated March 17, 1804, unpublished Favrot Papers.

¹²¹ Doc. M-121, *ibid.*

Commandant of West Florida, ordered through Don Carlos de Grand-Pré, Commandant at Baton Rouge, that Don Pedro re-enter Spanish territory or forfeit his leave.¹²² Don Pedro replied that his health did not permit him to re-enter active service and if he could not remain with his family on his plantation under the conditions of his leave of absence, he would be compelled to ask for retirement.¹²³ Accordingly, six months later he sent a petition to the King of Spain, reciting his military career of forty-two years and four months, and asking to be retired from the service with the rank of colonel and the pay of captain.¹²⁴

That Don Pedro had shown his previous thoroughness and administrative ability in his life as a planter is testified by a will made about this time, which shows the development of the plantation since its purchase. The plantation itself was now valued at \$8,000.00; twenty-eight slaves valued at from \$150.00 to \$700.00 each; and cattle, horses, farm animals, table silver, and furniture valued at \$26,050.00; and one lot valued at \$1,600.00. Madame de Favrot was named executrix of the will and tutrix of their children. There is a detailed list of books, furniture, clothing, jewelry and miscellaneous items to be given his children individually. There is also an inventory of kitchen-ware, liquors, dishes, glassware, table linens and books totaling \$1,668.00. The will ends with an itemized list of accounts receivable amounting to \$4,284.00, and accounts payable amounting to \$3,910.00.¹²⁵

Sad news, that of the death in Havana of his life-long friend, Don Carlos de Grand-Pré, reached Don Pedro in the summer of 1809 while he was at the plantation of Dr. Raoul at Bayou des Ecorre, for an operation and medical treatment. Grand-Pré had named Don Pedro as executor of his estate.

Don Carlos de Grand-Pré was, like Don Pedro, a French Creole, in the service of Spain, whose family had earlier served under Bienville.¹²⁶ He had become allied with the Spanish regime through the marriage of his sister, Charlotte, to Antonio Gayarré, commissary of war under Galvez, and ancestor of the later historian. This fact, along with his non-revolutionary conservatism

¹²² Doc. R-478, dated June 20, 1804, *ibid.*

¹²³ Doc. R-479, dated June 20, 1804, *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Doc. R-487, dated January 15, 1805, *ibid.* He never got the pay, so St. Clair Favrot went to war against Spain in 1898 (S-90A).

¹²⁵ Doc. S-18, dated May 16, 1805, revised February 15, 1809, *ibid.*

¹²⁶ Rowland and Sanders, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, III, 687.

at the time of Ulloa's expulsion,¹²⁷ may largely account for Carondelet's particular confidence in him during the presence in this country of Citizen Genet. Grand-Pré had commanded at Pointe Coupée and Natchez and, from about 1798 to 1809 had been in command at Baton Rouge until, unjustly accused of pro-French sympathies when he had been removed to Havana for questioning.

Grand-Pré was succeeded at Baton Rouge by Don Carlos de Hault de Lassus, under whose administration the West Florida rebellion, long brewing, due to the dissatisfaction of the overwhelmingly American population with the weakness and vacillation of Spanish rule, reached its tragic climax on September 23, 1810.

The Louisiana Gazette wrote three days later: "A rumor was afloat this morning that the inhabitants of Bayou Sarah had marched down to Baton Rouge in hostile array, that Colonel Lassus has opposed them, but was overpowered after several being killed and wounded, . . . the American flag was displayed over the fort. . . . Reports say that a son of the late Governor Grand-Pré has been wounded."¹²⁸

Unfortunately for Louis de Grand-Pré, the rumor was true. He died of his wound in the arms of Luis Favrot, but the heaviest heart was that of Josephine Favrot, Louis' betrothed, who had awakened in the night with a terrible vision of Louis covered with blood and insisted on being brought to his side, across the river.¹²⁹

Responding to a request for information, Don Pedro's tribute to the young lieutenant was published in *The Louisiana Courier*, October 29:

M. Louis de Grand-Pré has just met his death, victim of his devotion to the Spanish cause, and of military bravery. He died. . . . due to the many wounds received in the defense of Baton Rouge. . . . So deeply ensconced in his generous heart was the memory of the atrocious persecutions which his honored father had recently suffered at the hands of the Spanish Service, that he actually seemed to forget that this fact had poisoned and doubtlessly shortened his days; . . . this valorous Creole wanted to prove that those of his blood had never known intrigue or treachery . . . , but that they knew to

¹²⁷ Caughey, *Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana*, 17-18.

¹²⁸ Stanley C. Arthur, *The Story of the West Florida Rebellion*, 117.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* See also Henry L. Favrot, "The West Florida Revolution and incidents Growing Out of It," in *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society*, I, Part 3, p. 19.

pardon, or to die, having fought for the cause to which they had pledged themselves. . . . This example of honor was but 23 years old, he breathed his last September 24, at two in the morning, in the arms of my eldest son, midst the regrets and lamentations of his family and numerous friends. . . . The loss of this man was even regretted by his enemies, who gave testimonies of veneration by funeral honors, characterized by sadness and mourning.¹³⁰

As Don Pedro, in his little Textbook long ago, had said, "poetry moves the heart and soul deeply." When deeply moved himself, it was natural for him, as for so many others of his day, to turn to poetry as an expression of his sorrow, in this little eulogy to Louis de Grand-Pré:

Un seul trepas ternit votre victoire
En y mêlantela plus juste douleur
Louis de Grand-Pré, guidé par sa valeur,
De blessures courbé, tombe couvert de gloire.
Jeune heros, que ce beau devouement
Jette d'éclat sur ton dernier moment!
Au milieu des regrets qu'on donne à ta mémoire,
On ne peut s'empêcher d'envier ton trépas,
Modèle de l'honneur tu vivras dans l'histoire
Entre Jumonville et d'Assas.¹³¹

Josephine never married. As Stanley Clisby Arthur tells the old story again: "She remained true to her dead lover, and throughout a long life was wedded only to her art, her brush and pencil depicting the lovely flowers that grew in profusion all about the Favrot plantation."¹³² One of her hobbies was sketching her friends, and the Favrot Collection includes some charming miniatures, among them one of Thereze Vandenclooster, the Belgian wife of Fulwar Skipwith, president of the short-lived Republic of West Florida. Other miniatures are of her fiancé, Louis Grand-Pré, and her favorite brother, Philogene. She liked to dabble in writing, too, and some of her efforts were published under the pen-name of "Democritus."

After a brief life of a couple of months, the Republic of West Florida, under President Fulwar Skipwith, was taken over by Governor Claiborne at the head of a detachment of United States soldiers. The Favrot Collection possesses one of the only two or three known copies of the *Ordinances* adopted thirty

¹³⁰ Doc. R-1081, unpublished Favrot Papers.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 117.

days before the rebellion by the convention of citizens in an attempt to reconcile their differences with the Spanish government. Don Pedro, in a letter to the Marquis de Someruelos, Captain General at Cuba, describes in detail the taking of the fort, with the death of de Grand-Pré, and analyzes the causes of the revolt.¹³³

In 1814, Don Pedro was a member of the State Legislature, and as a member of a committee of defense of that body, he again—after thirty-five years—prepared and wrote an article giving his opinion as to the most effective methods to be employed without delay for the defense of New Orleans and Louisiana against the British. It was in part as follows:

1st. Fort St. Philipe of Plaquemine must be put in the shortest time in the best state of defense in order to prevent the enemy's ships from going up the river beyond that fort.

2nd. it is necessary to arm the old Fort Bourbon with six cannons of calibre 18 and to operate a smithy to provide red-hot balls to be used to set fire to the armed vessels that might lie in ambush.

3rd. as the English Turn is the most advantageous point for intercepting the passage of the river, it is necessary to mount at that place on the right bank and on the left bank an important battery with a sufficient number of militiamen and of regular troops for the purpose of repulsing the enemy should he attempt to effect a landing.

4th. since at a league beyond and below the fort of Plaquemine and particularly on the right bank of the river, it will be easy for the enemy to effect a landing to take position in front of the fort, to transport there its artillery and to place a battery, it seems to me essential to have there a sufficient number of militiamen, to harass the enemy in case he should make any attempts.

5th. it would be necessary to make some barricades of felled trees at intervals along the road of Chef Menteur to be used as ambuses by our troops in case of need.

6th. to send to the Belize ships in sufficient force to resist those of the enemy, there could also be sent there the Louisiana which, being disabled, could be foundered to obstruct one of the passes, it is also necessary that all the passes be well defended and that a sufficient number of fire-ships be available which properly steered could set fire to many vessels.

¹³³ Doc. R-583, dated January 8, 1811, unpublished Favrot Papers.

7th. it is necessary to have some dragoons stationed at Pointe-a-la-Hache to receive the reports of the Commander of the fort of Plaquemine and forward them to the government's headquarters in New Orleans. There should be stationed two dragoons every four leagues so that the reports may be transmitted with greater speed, and these dragoons should be in service day and night.

All the works, all the preparations hereinabove mentioned must be effected in the course of the week and even sooner if possible, so that we be not exposed to any surprise, which would create a distressing confusion amongst us.

I do not speak of Fort St. John (Spanish Fort) and its vicinity because I suppose that it is in the best state of defense.

New Orleans, November 19, 1814.

(Signed:) Favrot¹³⁴

Two months later, following the Battle of New Orleans, Don Pedro wrote a racy account of the exciting aftermath of those days to his wife. Not the least interesting part is a conversation reported to him between two Captains, one English, on the day of the exchange of prisoners:

New Orleans, January 21, 1815, Saturday Morning

Always do I take pleasure, my beloved friend, in conversing with you of things, and of circumstances, which may prove agreeable, and entertaining to you as well as my daughters.

I write this to be entrusted to M. Ternand and enclose that which I did not wish to insert in my last, which was sent by mail, and one from your son (Philogene) which informs you that our famous English have re-embarked with a now well-known loss of more than 3,500, not to say 3,800, considering the wounded which they carried off. On the eve of their departure, their progress was to be stopped; 2,000 men were to wait for them in the woods and were to pursue them from the rear and place them under three fires which would have destroyed from four to five hundred—but that was mentioned before more than forty persons, in front of the guard-house, before the Police, and during the same night they were warned and they doubled their marches, leaving behind fourteen pieces of artillery. . . .

General Jackson, his presence has revived the spirits and saved the country. . . .

The day of the exchange of prisoners, a captain named Roque was appointed to go in advance. He had an hour's conversation with an English captain who asked him if there

¹³⁴ Doc. R-646, dated November 19, 1814, *ibid.*

were in the City many French of the Party of Louis XVIII? "Very few." "And of Bonaparte?" "Many." "Do you look upon him as a great man, as a general?" "I look upon him as the greatest hero of which history speaks, as such I consider him, but as a Sovereign, an ambitious scoundrel." . . .

The Englishman concluded by saying that, "We fell short of our conquest, but we are going to fetch our General Wellington, and we shall return in force." . . . "We had not expected to have to deal with Frenchmen. Your 'Kentoques', called 'Coal Peddlers', 'Dirty Shirts', are trifles, they would have all fled as they did on the other side;¹³⁵ here they are brave because they fired from behind a six-foot rampart, twelve feet wide. We well saw that your artillery was served by Frenchmen. Had they been only 'Kentoques', they do not know how to take a sight. We have lost a large number of great officers of the nobility; when this news shall be known in London, all the ladies shall shed tears of blood and all the City shall be in mourning." . . .

We are not yet assured as to the number of negroes which they took. It is reported that it was their intention to send them back; that they had need of them for the transportation of their effects. It is to be hoped that they shall act more honestly.

Just now, Mr. Clay, (John Clay, brother of Henry Clay) who breakfasts here with me, told me that Favrot (Luis) was to come to the City today, that General Jackson was to be at the Square at two o'clock with his troops dressed in uniform; they are to sing some stanzas to him in token of gratitude; crown him with laurel. Festive Fireworks were spoken of but he did not want the superfluous expense incurred. Clay has gone to the home of Duralde to write to his wife and asked me to herewith enclose his letter; he bears himself like a Canon.

People are convinced that the resident farmers shall be sent back home within a few days; but before that, assurance that the enemy has departed and set sail for Jamaica is wanted and to retain some people to watch all entries of canals, bayous, etc., and to re-enforce and fortify the by-way of the two banks. That is well.

The same day of the grand attack here, the Fort of Plaquemine was also attacked. They threw 800 bombs during four days. They were compelled to retire, doing nothing. . . . On all sides they failed; they claim this comes from the mis-

¹³⁵ What a contrast with Josephine's sentiments on behalf of her contemporary Louisianians! "Invincible Tennesseans, who enduring with a fortitude, without example, hunger, fatigue, and the intemperance of the season, rush to the Fields of Mars, and like Achilles, throw at once consternation into the ranks of the enemy; accept the sentiments of admiration which heroism commands." Doc. E-668, dated January 15, 1815, *ibid.*

understanding of the leaders who have all been sacrificed, and of their best officers, colonels, majors, captains, all dead, wounded, etc. . . .

January 22 (Continued)

It is twelve o'clock noon; and I have just seen two officers who are being led prisoners with 54 soldiers, captured on the side of the Shells (Shell Beach). The officers are two young men, one nineteen years old and the other twenty-one, who are of the cavalry. They admit that they have lost all their officers; there remains to them only seven captains, three majors and one colonel, a few inferior officers.

The General is expected on the Square at three o'clock with a part of his troops. It is now known that the squadron was composed of eleven warships, twenty-four frigates and of more than sixty transports. They were so sure of winning that General Packenham had been selected to be Governor; all the officers (to be) on his staff; the Collector of Customs was on board. Many ladies followed their husbands and many return widows.

De Blanc, whom I saw at the Government House, told me that Neville (De Clouet, Don Pedro's nephew) has arrived. I shall certainly see him between this and tonight.

At this moment, there are on the Square more than 2,500 persons awaiting the entry of the General. There are at least one thousand women—ladies and others, young ladies, etc. I am going to meet Little Aunt on the Square; all her daughters are there.

This 23rd in the morning at 8 o'clock.

I have never seen, my beloved friend, a crowd of people so joyous, as those who gathered there. To see so many people of both sexes and all ages moving about on the Square, and to see all the troops arrive there to the sound of military music and of cannon. This had an imposing air: to see more than 12,000 souls of which 8,000 were armed. Joy was in every face; the General had made his speech at the camp, which will be put in the next newspaper, which I shall have reach you by private hand.

I met Neville ¹²⁰ who came to learn whether he should send down 300 militiamen from his regiment. He believes that a counter-order will be given him since they have sent back at least 2,500 "Kentoques," and Tennesseeans who are at the reserve camp at Avart; there remain at camp, fortified by the line, about 4,000 men to guard the batteries and that of the other bank where the field-works shall be continued to serve in case of need. . . .

¹²⁰ Neville de Clouet. See Cable, *Strange True Stories of Louisiana*, 110.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, a *Te Deum* will be sung. The General is to be crowned: twelve young girls are to strew flowers before him. There will be a band, several songs in praise of him. They are practising at the home of Mme. Florisant.

We learn that the English have sent back all the negroes. They left them on the shore of Lake Borgne. They have gone to fetch them. They committed few depredations at the home of Lassige, thanks to the mulatto which he had, who belonged to Brognier (Luis Brognier De Clouet, another nephew) but in other places they burned the wood of beds, the chairs, chests-of-drawers and carried away the doors and windows to make themselves huts.

You must know that yesterday I saw Mignon Badon, married to a musician named Valois. I did not recognize her, so thin is she. She resembles the late Mme. Marigny. She asked me to tell you she sends you her love. She certainly would like to see Josephine. She is to give me some songs to send her.

I went to Mlle. Bronnair's to see whether I could find some black cloth. . . . There is no more black cambric. . . . My mourning (for his sister, Louise De Clouet, who had died Christmas morning, 1814) is a crepe hat-band, and a crepe band on my arm, my black breeches and my boots.

It is assumed that the squadron is at Ship Island, taking on provisions for Jamaica; they have placed their General Packenham in a hogshead of rum to be carried to London. What a sight for his wife, who is on board and who expected to be the Louisiana Governor's lady; and others who are on board who have lost their husbands.

I do not write to my dear Josephine nor Octavine but all that I would tell them is contained here. I embrace them from the depths of my soul without forgetting Pulcherie and Bouvier to whom I recommend the care of the garden and to sow the seeds; that he consult the gardener; I rely on his diligence; and that they prepare the ground to sow four or five arpents of rice where the negroes make their breakfast.

I shall send Amarante to carry this letter to M. Ternand. I fear he has left. You have enough to read this time.

Farewell, my dear, loving, good friend. I expect to leave on the first or second of February, unless I am detained in collecting some money of which I shall bring some to pay our taxes. Meanwhile, I embrace you with ardour and am, for life, your loving and devoted spouse.

(Signed:) Ft. (Don Pedro Favrot)¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Doc. R-658, dated January 21, 1815, unpublished Favrot Papers. Read by H. Richmond Favrot at a meeting of the Louisiana Historical Society, January 28, 1945.

Worthy of note in the above is the reference to the fact that "Packenham was to be governor, all the officers (to be) on his staff; the Collector of Customs was on board. Many ladies followed their husbands. . . . (General Packenham's wife was) on board and expected to be the Louisiana Governor's lady." Historians assert the battle occurred after the Treaty of Ghent, but treaties sometimes have loopholes, and one cannot escape the conclusion that, had they won the battle, the British were prepared to stay. They had never recognized the validity of Spain's claim to West Florida. On the fields of Chalmette, British ambitions in the Mississippi Valley were checked forever, and to that extent New Orleans ranks as one of history's decisive battles.

Of equal interest is the reference to Bonaparte and the regard in which he was held in Louisiana. Later elaboration on this theme is contained in a letter written to Don Pedro by his second son, Philogene, from New Orleans on May 26, 1815:

My dear Papa,

Just as anticipated, I arrived here yesterday around ten o'clock. The church bells were going full blast making an infernal harmony. I thought the four corners of the town on fire, however, it was only the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi.

As I had neither stated nor foreseen, nor did I expect it any more than the others, Napoleon Bonaparte is on the throne of France, and this is how it came about.

He left his Island of Elba with one thousand men and arrived at Frejus in Provence, where his army is increased by twelve thousand men, he marches with these toward Lyons, where he meets the army of King Louis; he advances upon this army, guarded by only fifty men and offers his life to him who wishes to take it, instead of this the whole army starts shouting, "Long live the Emperor and the Commander General". This army immediately escaped to Calais with Talleyrand.

This is what is given out by a vessel which comes from Havre; this is what is given out by an English vessel, and this is what is stated in a fly-sheet arriving from the North this morning where it came on a boat which had left La Rochelle thirty-five days ago.

Well, this is what brings up the price of wine fifteen dollars.

Behold, last night they promenaded the streets, carrying the bust of Bonaparte with candles and music and shouts

of "Long live Napoleon!" They carried this bust to the theatre where there was a play composed for the occasion.

Pray, comfort my dear Mamma, tell her that next time I shall write to her, make her forget my absence which shall not be long. Also kiss my sisters, my dear little cousin and shake hands with Favrot and Bouvier.

I am your loving son,

(Signed:) Philogene.¹³⁸

The part that the Baratarian pirates played in the Battle of New Orleans, was not specifically mentioned in Don Pedro's letter to his wife, although Laffite and his buccaneers may have been included in the remark of the English captain that "we well saw that your artillery was served by Frenchmen." Whether all lived up to the terms of their pardon and probation, may be judged from the following letter to Don Pedro, again from Philogene, September 25, 1816:

I truly believe, my dear Father that you are angry with me; yet I have done you nothing. If I was unable to tell you good-bye on leaving the city, it was because M. Jean Pierre waited at the water's edge to give me passage as far as M. Andry's, where I had left my horse.

Undoubtedly, you know that there arrives every day in the City, Corsairs, who go to a pass in the Bay of St. Bernard, called "Matagorda" and under a so-called independent flag, pillage and seize all Spanish vessels in the Gulf of Mexico, but you perhaps do not know that lately a Spanish Flotilla composed of a sloop of war, of two brigs and of two schooners, met an American schooner belonging to the Government, and taking her for an independent vessel, poured broadside into it and killed and wounded several men, the American Captain having but one pirate cannon. As soon as he surrendered to His Catholic Majesty as prisoner, the Spanish Captain was unwilling to receive him as prisoner, saying he had made a mistake. I do not know how all that terminated. This affair has occasioned much common talk. A council of war was held in the City and after having heard speeches by M. Grymes, Duncan, Deversac and others, a resolution was adopted to ask Commodore Preston, in command at that encounter, to take vengeance immediately for this insult given our Flag; the same request is to be made of the President.

It is to be noted that M. Livingston was the only one who opposed this project; but notwithstanding his eloquence

¹³⁸ Doc. R-678, dated May 26, 1815, unpublished Favrot Papers.

and his logic, the desire for vengeance, sharpened by thirst for gold, carried by a great majority.

The famous Garcia, whom you have known, who desired but to meet a vessel of the Independents, was captured lately by Beluche (a lieutenant of Laffite). His schooner was loaded with silver and is now, it is said, in the river.

Tell Phine that I shall answer her letter when I shall have a moment of leisure; at this instant, I am forced to leave you to assist in the construction of a mow.

Embrace for me my good Mama and my sisters, give Malevein (Philogene's horse) a fillup on the nose and believe, my dear Papa, in the feeling of respect with which I am your son,

Wholly dutiful,

(Signed:) P. Favrot¹³⁹

All three of Don Pedro's sons had followed at least briefly the military tradition. Luis, after two years in the Spanish service, and then in the Seventh Regiment of militia of Orleans Territory, was a major of Iberville Parish militia near New Orleans at the time of the battle, and later was promoted to Colonel of the Eighth Regiment of State Militia by Governor James Villeré. Bouvier's military service appears to have started with a captaincy in the Eleventh Regiment of State Militia, on February 27, 1836, twelve years after his father's death. Philogene began his career at Fort St. Philip in 1812 as an ensign of the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry, commissioned by President Madison, and served throughout the Mississippi Valley ranging as far north as Detroit, ending his military career under Winchester at Mobile in 1815.¹⁴⁰

Like their father, too, all became active citizens of the United States. On February 4, 1819, Philogene was appointed Judge of West Baton Rouge Parish by Governor James Villeré.¹⁴¹

This was the year that Don Pedro with the help of Josephine made copies of all the family papers for his two younger sons, since the originals would all go to the eldest son, Luis; at the same time writing his touching farewell letter to his children which was to be read after his death.

¹³⁹ Doc. R-699, dated September 25, 1816, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Doc. R-659, dated January 24, 1815, *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Doc. R-736, dated February 4, 1819, *ibid.*

Philogene's bundle of copies was never opened by him and he never saw the farewell letter his father had written him, because the *Courier de la Louisiane* quoting *The Gazette of Baton Rouge*, published this announcement in its issue of February 20, 1822:¹⁴²

We have to perform the painful task of announcing to our readers the unfortunate results of a duel which took place Monday, the eleventh of the current month at Pinkneyville, between M. Louis Esnault, judge of the Fourth District Court, and Philogene Favrot, judge of West Baton-Rouge parish, in which the latter lost his life and his adversary received four wounds that at first seemed to be somewhat serious, but it is to be presumed that they will not be attended with dangerous consequences.

These gentlemen fought with the sabre, and the duel was waged with such fury that the witnesses could hardly follow the blows.

The body of M. Favrot has been exhumed at Pointe Coupée, where he had been buried, and brought to Baton-Rouge, where another funeral was held Thursday morning, the fourteenth of the current month. He leaves his respectable and aged parents whom nothing could console for their loss.

M. Esnault is the father of a large family.

Another newspaper extract of May 15, 1822,¹⁴³ refers to a New Orleans requiem:

The memorial services of M. Philogene Favrot were held in the Cathedral Church of this city last Saturday. . . . The feeling of sorrow which had prompted those present to assemble gave these pious ceremonies something so wonderful and sad that it is painful to describe them. There was a large assemblage of citizens present.

This blow was too much for Don Pedro at his advanced age and soon afterwards, July 5, 1824, the *Courier de la Louisiane* published the following obituary, copied from the *Baton-Rouge Gazette*:

Society has lost in the person of Pierre Favrot, Esq., a gentleman who was for a long series of years one of its ornaments. A good father, a good husband, a sincere friend; he added to these qualities that stern honesty which won for him the esteem and friendship of his fellow citizens. A

¹⁴² Doc. R-776B, copied from *Le Courier de la Louisiane*, February 20, 1822, page 2, columns 2-3, in Louisiana State Museum.

¹⁴³ *Le Courier de la Louisiane*, May 15, 1822, page 3, column 1.

soldier from his infancy, he always preserved that frankness which distinguishes that class of society. When toward the end of his career Divine Providence chose to send him disease and affliction, he exhibited the firmness of courage and the resignation of virtue.

May the sincere regret of his numerous friends contribute to relieve the sorrows of his family; and may they see in this feeble homage rendered to his memory, the tribute of respect due to his virtue.

XI. THE PIERRE JOSEPH de FAVROT SOCIETY, C.A.R.

Maria Francesca survived Don Pedro eighteen years. The tender epitaph on the headstone of her tomb in the Favrot Plot in the now deserted Highland Cemetery was inscribed by her children:

Rest in peace, mother dear,
Your life was a constant
Abnegation of yourself of which
The tomb has encompassed
The sufferings and the virtues.
God reward you for it in
A most happy sojourn.

(French translated)

Close in death as in life, Maria Francesca and Don Pedro rest side by side with their children near them. Under a slab bearing the lines, "Modèle de Piété, d'Amitié, de Modestie," lies Josephine, who once had mused, perhaps writing in this very spot:

What pains we take in the acquisition of learning,
Of talents, which shall be buried in a grave,
That a little earth shall rob from a world
Which shall not retain even its memory!
At the last hour, virtues which we have practiced
Shall not survive us; all follows us in the eternal night,
All goes like us into oblivion.
What discouragement in the idea of the nothingness
Of all that we have been.
How great our gratitude to the Supreme Being
Who has deigned to create in us an immortal soul
Which escapes the destruction of our whole being!
Oh my God! I thank you for having given me a soul
Which shall outlive me,
For a soul capable of lifting itself up to You,
Which feels the benefits of Your favor,
And trusts in Your power for everything;
Virtue is not an empty name
When it is from You that its reward shall come.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Doc. R-1037, unpublished Favrot Papers.

Later generations of the family have found peace in other plots, but although the boundaries of Louisiana State University are just to the north, and in other directions encroaching oil wells as well as boundary disputes and even vandals have threatened this "superficial arpent of land" donated by George Garic in 1819 to the congregation of the Roman Catholic Church, represented by Fr. Juan Brady,¹⁴⁵ it is still God's Acre.

Within this graveyard, the Favrot Plot, surrounded by a low brick wall, is a quiet sanctuary and except for the occasional visit of a member of the family, it had been almost forgotten for generations, when on May 21, 1938, it came to brief life for solemn ceremonies when the Children of the American Revolution under the sponsorship of the Baton Rouge Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, placed a marker on the grave of Don Pedro.¹⁴⁶

Following the customary ritual, a resume of Don Pedro's life was given by one of his descendants and there were heard again the old names, names to conjure with in the early history of Louisiana. Bienville, Noyan, Macarti, Maurepas and Kelerec; Galvez, Miro, Piernas, Carondelet; Bouligny, DeClouet, Gayoso, San Maxent; Casa Calvo, Salcedo and Grand-Pré; Laussat, Clairborne and Jackson; long gone to their eternal resting place, each had briefly played his part.

As the final notes of the bugler's "Taps" were lost in the gathering twilight those present thought of the old Frenchman, soldier of Spain, and of his campaigns, cannon and muster rolls. He seemed a symbol of the loyal patriotism of Creole Louisiana to the United States. Don Pedro's divided loyalties of French blood and Spanish service had somehow achieved such harmony with his native American birth and his service against the English in the cause of the American Republic, that, one hundred and fourteen years after his death he, as a Revolutionary patriot had given his name to the Pierre Joseph de Favrot Society of the Children of the American Revolution in that Baton Rouge which he had long ago commanded, and where he had ended his days proudly as an American citizen.

¹⁴⁵ See Act of Donation, in East Baton Rouge Parish Records, Book G, Folio 546, Office of Clerk of Court, Baton Rouge.

¹⁴⁶ Baton Rouge *Sunday State-Times-Morning Advocate*, May 22, 1938, contains a complete account of these ceremonies. Regarding the cemetery, see *Baton Rouge State-Times*, December 19, 1939, and Centennial Edition, December 15, 1942.

SOUTHERN LOUISIANA AND SOUTHERN ALABAMA IN 1819: THE JOURNAL OF JAMES LEANDER CATHCART

*Edited by WALTER PRICHARD, FRED B. KNIFFEN, and
CLAIR A. BROWN*

INTRODUCTION¹

The War of 1812 revealed many weaknesses in the United States Navy and showed the need for more adequate defense of our coastline and better protection for our commerce on the high seas. While the war was still in progress Congress had been considering these matters; and on February 7, 1815, an act was approved for the purpose of attaining these objectives.² The President was empowered to appoint a Board of Navy Commissioners, consisting of three high-ranking naval officers, whose duty it was, under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy, to exercise a general supervision over the naval establishment. This Navy Board instituted a program of new naval construction and of repair and modernization of the public vessels then in service. Such a program called for an adequate and continuous supply of timber suitable for naval construction, particularly live oak and red cedar. The public lands were being rapidly taken up by settlers; hence, if the Navy was to have the benefit of this type of timber growing on such lands, it was necessary to make proper surveys in order to have correct information upon which to act in reserving from sale public lands upon which such timber grew. On March 1, 1817, Congress passed an act authorizing the President to institute the necessary surveys and to make reservation of such timber lands for the benefit of the Navy.³

The next step in carrying this act into effect called for the appointment of competent agents and surveyors to select the lands to be thus reserved, prior to the time when they were to be offered for sale to prospective settlers. Acting under authority of this act, John C. Calhoun, then Secretary of War in Monroe's cabinet and also acting Secretary of the Navy, on November 4, 1818, commissioned James Leander Cathcart and James Hutton

¹ Written by Walter Prichard.

² *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., Appendix, 1908, gives the complete text of the act creating the Board of Navy Commissioners.

³ *Acts passed at the Second Session of the Fourteenth Congress of the United States*. 207-208.

as Navy Agents and John Landreth as Surveyor, and directed them to make the necessary surveys of live oak and red cedar timber suitable for the construction of naval vessels, located in the southern sections of Louisiana and the Alabama Territory.

Nothing is known of the previous or subsequent careers of James Hutton and John Landreth, but James Leander Cathcart had been engaged in the diplomatic service of the United States for many years prior to this new assignment and had had an interesting and colorful career in that capacity.

James Leander Cathcart was born in Ireland on June 1, 1767, and was brought to the United States as a child. In 1779 he became a midshipman in the United States Navy, but was captured soon thereafter by the British and held as a prisoner of war until March 1782, when he made his escape. He later took service on a United States merchant vessel, but was captured by an Algerine vessel on July 25, 1785, and sold into slavery with the rest of the crew. Although a prisoner, he succeeded in ingratiating himself with his captors, became a clerk in their marine service, and in that capacity gained influence with the Dey of Algiers and thus helped to arrange a treaty with the United States in 1795 for the release of prisoners. The treaty was signed and Cathcart sailed for Philadelphia on May 8, 1796, carrying dispatches from Joel Barlow and a letter to President Washington.

In appreciation of his previous service and because of his intimate knowledge of the affairs of the Barbary States, he was appointed United States Consul at Tripoli, July 10, 1797, but remained for some time in Philadelphia to select presents and naval stores as tribute to Algiers. During his prolonged stay in Philadelphia Cathcart married Jane Bancker Woodside of that city, June 5, 1798, by whom he subsequently had twelve children.

In December 1798 he was appointed a special diplomatic agent and accompanied William Eaton to Tunis, and on March 26, 1799, they secured a revision of the Treaty of 1797 with that power. He then proceeded to his consular post at Tripoli, but retired to Leghorn, in Italy, when Tripoli declared war on the United States in May 1801. Upon Cathcart's suggestion William Eaton espoused the cause of the exiled rightful Pasha of Tripoli, then in Tunis. He attempted to treat with Tripoli in 1802, but

was not received. He was then appointed Consul-General to Algiers, but was not received; and on April 11, 1803, he was appointed Consul to Tunis instead, as successor to Joseph Donaldson. He later served as United States Consul at Madeira, 1807-1815, and at Cadiz, 1815-1817.

Cathcart's salary as Consul at Cadiz was only \$2,000 per annum, which was insufficient for the support of his large family; so he resigned his post and returned to the United States seeking more lucrative public employment. The next we hear of him is when he is appointed as Navy Agent for the survey and protection of the timber in Louisiana and Florida suitable for naval purposes. He then served in that capacity from 1818 to 1820, after which he was appointed to a position in the Treasury Department, which he appears to have held until his death on October 6, 1843.⁴

Like most of the diplomatic agents of the United States in the early days, Cathcart found great difficulty in obtaining a final settlement of his accounts and claims for such services. His claims were considered by Congress in 1826 and again in 1836, but they had not yet been settled to Cathcart's satisfaction when he died. James Leander Cathcart, Jr., as administrator of his deceased father's estate, as late as 1847 was still pressing some of these claims for losses and services of his father dating back for a half century.⁵

Cathcart's daughter, Mrs. Jane B. Newkirk, compiled and published the journal of his Algerine captivity and a volume of his official correspondence: *The Captives* (Laporte, Indiana, 1899) and *Tripoli . . . Letter-Book of James Leander Cathcart* (Laporte, Indiana, 1901), respectively.⁶

In his new position as Navy Agent for the protection of timber suitable for naval purposes Cathcart received an annual salary of \$2,500, together with personal expenses and allowances for two servants. James Hutton, the other Navy Agent acting

⁴ The best brief biography of James Leander Cathcart is found in *Dictionary of American Biography*, III, 572-573. Information on his diplomatic career may be gleaned from *American State Papers, Miscellaneous*, I, 307; II, 20, 22, 23, 244, 315; *ibid.*, *Foreign Relations*, I, 104, 120; II, 350, 352, 355-357, 461, 462, 699, 700; and other published documents.

⁵ Information on these claims may be found in *Senate Journal*, 19 Cong., 1 Sess. (1825-26), 33, 115, 142; *ibid.*, 24 Cong., 1 Sess. (1835-36), 47, 280, 462, 466, 529, 534, 537, 543, 559; *ibid.*, 29 Cong., 2 Sess. (1846-47), 54, 95, 162; *Senate Documents*, 19 Cong., 1 Sess. (1825-26), No. 26; *ibid.*, 24 Cong., 1 Sess. (1835-36), No. 302; *ibid.*, 29 Cong., 2 Sess. (1846-47), No. 49.

⁶ *Dictionary of American Biography*, III, 573.

with him, received a salary of only \$2,000 and allowance for one servant, which was the same salary and allowance provided for John Landreth, the Surveyor for the Agents. In the final settlement for these services all the salaries were computed from November 4, 1818, the date of all their commissions. Cathcart was paid a salary to February 20, 1820; Hutton only to December 20, 1819; and Landreth to February 22, 1820. Cathcart received a total of \$3,255.13 as salary, together with \$522.01 additional for contingencies; Hutton received a total of \$2,261.10 as salary, with no mention of contingencies, which would indicate that this item was included in the allowance to Cathcart or to Landreth, or to both, for this purpose; and Landreth received a total of \$2,604.11 as salary, together with \$340.75 for contingencies.⁷ The fact that Cathcart received a higher salary than Hutton would indicate that he was head of the party and that he assumed a greater responsibility, as is also implied from the fact that Cathcart seems to have kept all the records of the survey and made the final report.

Since there were no merchant vessels making regularly scheduled trips between Atlantic seaboard ports and New Orleans in those days, the United States Schooner *Nonesuch* was placed at the disposal of Cathcart and his party for the trip from Norfolk to New Orleans, thence to Mobile, and back to Baltimore after the survey had been completed. Cathcart traveled from Washington to Baltimore on November 18, 1818, where he met Landreth who was there to purchase necessary supplies and equipment for the survey. They took passage on the following day for Norfolk on a steamboat, and arrived on the 20th. The *Nonesuch* was not yet ready to sail for New Orleans, and it was not until the 28th that she departed. After a rather stormy voyage of twenty-six days, they arrived in New Orleans on December 27, 1818.

Cathcart found awaiting him in New Orleans a letter from James Hutton, the other Navy Agent, who, for some reason which the writer has been unable to discover, was already in Louisiana. This letter suggested that it would be best to make the survey of the Attakapas region first, and Hutton promised to meet the other members of the party at Franklin on Bayou Teche upon their arrival there. Cathcart consulted with Captain Daniel T.

⁷ *American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, IV, 107.

Patterson, the naval officer then in command of the New Orleans station, procured such maps and charts of the region to be surveyed as were available, talked with people who were familiar with the country, and then proceeded to make the necessary arrangements for the trip to Bayou Teche. Captain Patterson provided a small boat for the use of the party and sent Lieutenant Nicholas Marchand, a native of Louisiana, to accompany them. Most of the details of securing provisions and equipment were left to Lieutenant Marchand, to Cathcart's later regret and embarrassment, as the equipment proved quite inadequate for such a survey.

The information received by Cathcart in New Orleans seemed to indicate that there was not sufficient water in the canal leading from Bayou Lafourche to the Atchafalaya and Bayou Teche to accommodate their small cutter, and that it would be necessary for them to make the trip through Bayou Plaquemine instead. When all was in readiness the cutter left New Orleans on January 2, 1819, under command of Lieutenant Marchand, with instructions to await Cathcart's arrival at Donaldsonville, if there was sufficient water to enable them to go via Bayou Lafourche, and if not to proceed to the head of Bayou Plaquemine. Cathcart left New Orleans on January 4th, taking passage up the Mississippi on the steamboat *Governor Shelby*. However, the wind was so strong that the cutter could make little headway against the current, and the steamboat overtook the cutter on the 5th, about twenty miles below Donaldsonville, and towed it on up to the head of Bayou Plaquemine, where the steamboat left them late that same day. The cutter had to be transported overland for about six miles from the Mississippi to the head of navigation on Bayou Plaquemine, and it was not until January 12, 1819, that the party reached Franklin on Bayou Teche.

Hutton met the party at Franklin, and after gathering some additional information and provisions for the trip, the surveys proper were commenced. These continued for over six weeks, and after being unsuccessful in efforts to make arrangements for surveys of the lower Vermilion and Mermentau regions, the party departed from Franklin on March 3, 1819, for New Orleans, traveling over the same route by which they had come, and arrived in New Orleans on the 7th.

After spending about two weeks in New Orleans in gathering all available information as to the live oak on the northern shore of Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain, the party decided not to make a personal survey of that region, but to depart for Mobile and the Alabama region. They left New Orleans on the *Nonesuch* on March 21st and arrived at Mobile on the 29th. After a day in Mobile, the Agents took passage on a steamboat bound for St. Stephens on the Tombigbee River, where they arrived on April 6th. Learning that the red cedar timber in which they were interested was located near Claiborne on the Alabama River, they traveled overland from St. Stephens to that place, spent a few days in surveying and making reservation of the lands producing red cedar, and then departed for Mobile on April 15th. They were back in Mobile on April 18th, and on the 20th they set sail for Baltimore aboard the *Nonesuch*. After a stormy voyage of nearly a month, they arrived at Baltimore on May 18, 1819.

Cathcart did not tarry long in Baltimore, but set out on the following day for Washington, where he called at the Navy Department to report the results of the survey. Apparently he was occupied for some time there in making the maps, charts, etc., to accompany his Journal or Report.

As head of the party or mission, Cathcart appears to have been almost entirely responsible for the detailed Journal and Report of the survey, which is hereinafter reproduced in full. He was a very careful observer who appears to have possessed a great deal of information on a variety of subjects, and his Journal contains a vast amount of important and valuable information on the historical, geographical, geological, anthropological, and botanical features of the regions covered in the survey. However, Cathcart had his bias and his prejudices, which are reflected in many entries in his Journal or Report. In spite of these shortcomings, the Journal is a valuable addition to the previously published materials on the regions which he visited.

Although Cathcart's Report must have been of great value as a guide to the Board of Navy Commissioners in shaping their policy in reserving the public lands producing timber suitable for naval construction, no reference to the survey is found in the reports of the Navy Department until several years afterwards. On February 26, 1827, Samuel L. Southard, then Secretary of the Navy, sent the following communication, dated

January 29, 1827, to Henry R. Storrs, chairman of the House Naval Committee:

By a law of the 1st of March, 1817, the Secretary of the Navy was authorized, under the direction of the President, to appoint agents and a surveyor, to explore and select so much of the land, on which live oak and red cedar were produced, as would be sufficient for naval purposes. The President was authorized to reserve the land so selected, and penalties were provided for such as cut and carried away the timber growing upon it or other public lands. The duties of the agents and surveyor were, by the act of 15th May, 1820, assigned to the public surveyors, and by the law of 23d February, 1822, the President was directed to use the land and naval forces, and take other measures, for the protection of the timber on the public lands.

Under the law of March, 1817, two agents and a surveyor were appointed. They examined and surveyed the coasts of Alabama and Louisiana, and made voluminous reports of their proceedings; but it does not seem necessary, nor would it be possible to detail them in this letter. They resulted in a reservation, by the President, on the 29th February, 1820, of several islands in Lake Chetimaches, Louisiana, called Commissioners, Cypress and Six Islands, containing in all about 19,000 acres, and supposed at that time to have upon them about 37,000 live oak trees, of various sizes, fit for naval purposes, a part of them difficult of approach, and some inaccessible. The Commissioner of the General Land Office was directed not to offer these lands for sale. Other tracts were found with similar quantities of timber, fit for use, but not regarded as sufficient to justify reservation of them.⁸

It is also interesting to note that a report of the cost of this survey was not communicated to Congress until March 19, 1832, when the salaries and other allowances paid to Cathcart, Hutton, and Landreth were included in a "Statement of Moneys Paid to Agents and Assistants, for the Protection of Live Oak in Florida, since March 1, 1817, for Salaries and Contingent Expenses."⁹

The manuscript Report or Journal, which consists of ninety-eight closely-written pages and an Appendix of twenty-two pages, apparently reposed undisturbed in the records of the Navy Department for nearly a century and a quarter, until it was discovered in the National Archives by Dr. C. W. Thornthwaite, United States Soil Conservation Service. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Thornthwaite for discovering the original

⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 107.

manuscript and for realizing its great importance for students of Louisiana history. To Dr. Paul M. Hamar, Director of Research, The National Archives, the *Quarterly* is indebted for permission to publish the Journal.

Dr. Fred B. Kniffen, Professor of Anthropology and Geography and Head of the Department of Anthropology, Louisiana State University, procured a microfilm copy of the original manuscript and checked it against a typed copy of same. He has also contributed nearly three hundred footnotes on the geographical, geological, and anthropological observations made by Cathcart, and has also prepared the accompanying map showing Cathcart's route in Louisiana. All geographical nomenclature is given in terms of the current topographic maps of the areas involved, insofar as they are available.

Dr. Clair A. Brown, Professor of Botany, Louisiana State University, has contributed forty-two footnotes explanatory of the botanical observations made by Cathcart. His explanations are all based upon the most authentic botanical nomenclature; that for the woody plants follows that used by C. S. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America (Exclusive of Mexico)*, New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1922.

Walter Prichard, Head of the Department of History, Louisiana State University, and Editor of the *Quarterly*, has contributed the remainder of the footnotes, which deal with biographical and historical matters contained in the manuscript. He has also been entirely responsible for preparing the copy for the printers.

The Editor has endeavored to preserve the spelling, punctuation, and other features of the original manuscript, insofar as this was possible in transforming the document into printed form.

REPORT OF THE AGENTS ACTING UNDER THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF
THE 1ST DAY OF MARCH A D 1817¹

[p. 1]² The undersigned Agents of the United States acting by Commission from the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy³ bearing date the 4th of November (AD) 1818 in pursuance of

¹ This heading constitutes the title page of the manuscript journal.

² Page numbers inserted thus, in brackets in the printed text, indicate the beginnings of corresponding pages in the manuscript Journal.

³ John Caldwell Calhoun, the noted South Carolina statesman, was Acting Secretary of the Navy at this date. He was Secretary of War in Monroe's cabinet at that time, but when Benjamin Williams Crowninshield of Massachusetts resigned as Secretary of the Navy on October 1, 1818, Calhoun took over the administration of the Navy Department and exercised the functions of that office until Smith Thompson of New York, the new appointee, entered upon his duties on January 1, 1819. This service of Calhoun as Secretary of the Navy is mentioned by few, if any, of his biographers.

authority granted to him by the first section of the Act of Congress pass'd on the first day of March AD 1817 entitled, "An Act making reservation of certain public lands to supply timber for Naval purposes,"⁴ and in compliance with the Instructions which they have received from the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy & likewise from the Hon'ble Board of Navy Commissioners⁵ both dated the 13th of November AD 1818 have the honor most respectfully to

REPORT

That James Leander Cathcart having made the necessary arrangements as appears in the Appendix⁶ marked A Nos 1 a 5 proceeded to Baltimore on the 18th of Nov. & on the 19th took passage in the steam boat Virginia Capt'n Ferguson⁷ bound to Norgolk, where he, with the Surveyor Mr. John Landreth⁸ arrived on the 20th & finding that the United States Schooner Nonsuch⁹ Lieu't Com'r Claxton¹⁰ was under repairs & not ready to receive them, Mr. Cathcart informed the Navy Dep't thereof A No 6¹¹ & were detain'd until the 28th when at 3 P M they took their departure from Cape Henry; the light house bearing SE dist't 6 miles

⁴ The full text of this act is in *Acts passed at the Second Session of the Fourteenth Congress of the United States*, 207-208. The purpose of the act was to insure for the Navy an adequate supply of timber for future construction of naval vessels by reserving for that purpose tracts of public land on which there were stands of live oak and cedar timber suitable for naval construction.

⁵ The War of 1812 revealed the need for strengthening the United States Navy, and in line with this policy Congress passed "An Act to alter and amend the several acts for establishing a Navy Department, by adding thereto a Board of Commissioners." This act was approved February 7, 1815. It provided for the appointment of a Board of Navy Commissioners, consisting of three naval officers, not below the rank of post captain. The Board was attached to the office of the Secretary of the Navy, and, under his superintendence, was to have general control of naval affairs. However, it was specifically provided in the act that the Board was not to take from the Secretary of the Navy his control and direction of the naval forces of the United States. The members of the Board were given fixed salaries of \$3,500 each, and were authorized to appoint their own secretary to keep records of their activities.

Since the act creating the Board provided that the member holding the oldest commission in the Navy should preside, that position went to John Rodgers, the other two members of the Board being David Porter and Stephen Decatur. All members of the Board were naval officers of long and distinguished service, dating from the Quasi Naval War with France, 1798-1800. See *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., Appendix, 1908, for the text of the act creating the Board of Navy Commissioners; *Dictionary of American Biography*, for naval records of members of the Board.

⁶ Reference to Appendix to the manuscript Journal, which is printed herein at end of the Journal. This Appendix contains all the letters and documents to which Cathcart refers from time to time in the Journal.

⁷ This gentleman commanded the privately-owned steamboat plying between Baltimore and Norfolk in 1818.

⁸ Nothing has been found to afford a further clew to the identity of this gentleman except a remark in the Journal which indicates that he was a Scotchman by birth.

⁹ The *Nonesuch* was a United States naval vessel built about 1814. She rated fourteen guns, but appears to have mounted only six. The crew consisted of forty-eight officers and men. This vessel was put at the service of the Cathcart party for the trip to and from New Orleans and Mobile. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 308, 379, 469, 601, 819.)

¹⁰ Alexander Claxton was borned in Pennsylvania or Maryland about 1790, entered the navy as a midshipman June 20, 1806, became lieutenant January 8, 1813, master commandant March 28, 1820, and captain February 21, 1831. He died in Chili on March 7, 1841, while in command of the Pacific squadron. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 301, 347, 366, 457, 590, 599, 629, 902, 922; *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, I, 638.)

¹¹ Reference to Appendix to this Journal.

Nautical Day	Course	Dist.	Lat'd Obs'd	Long. in	Thermometer	Remarks— ¹²
Sund'y 29th Nov'r	S47°E.	65	DR: 36°, 20'N.	75°, 20'W.	air cabin water 69:68:70:65:	Moderate & variable
Mon'y 30th	S50°E.	71	35°, 35'N	74°, 13'W	56°:65°:76°:	Gale to N'ward
Tues'y 1st Dec'r	S47°E.	80	34°, 35'N	73°, 01'W	60 :70 :70 :	Hove too
Wedy 2nd	S45°E.	130	DR: 32°, 39'N	71°, 11'W	62 :72 :71 :	St Phillips shoal S7°, 15'W. 526 miles x4th Mayaguana E'r reef—S55W—228 miles—
Thus'y 3rd	S,23E.	137	30°, 27'N	70°, 9'W	64 :73 :71 :	NE point of the Grand Calcos S36W
xFr'l'y 4th	S,18E.	171	27°, 43'N	69°, 09'W	air 76 & 'cabin 205 miles at Mer'n bore away SW wind East—at 1 PM steer'd South per compass	205 miles at Mer'n bore away SW wind East—at 1 PM steer'd South per compass
Satur'y 5th Sund'y 6th	S, 3W. S,23W.	196 153	24°, 28' 25°, 05'	69°, 13'W 70°, 18'W	do 78 do 80 :82 :81 :	Squally with rain— Grand Calcos S72W. 65 miles Mayaguana N85W. 138 miles, bore away W; light airs NE
Mond'y 7th	S,87W.	44	No observation work'd with next day—		74 :78 :75 :	
Tues'y 8th	Hove too with Star'd tacks on board	54	22°, 13'	70°, 09'W	74 :76 :73 :	Strong gales at NNE with strong cur't seting to windw'd, St Phillips shoal S47W. 27 miles, Mayaguana 'N84W 90 miles—
Wed'y 9th	S,85W.	32	22°, 11'N	70°, 43'W	75 :78 :76 :	do NNE, heavy sea, St. Phillips S55W. 45 miles, Maya N84W. 57 miles
Thurs'y 10th			21°, 58'N	72°, 31½'W	80 :82 :80 :	At 4 AM wore ship C's West, at Mer- idian W by S—

¹² This table gives the sailing course, etc., of the *Nonesuch* from November 29 to December 10, 1818, when the daily recordings in the Journal began.

At 6.30 P M shortened sail, & backd the Fore topsail, believing ourselves to be about 25 miles from the Caycos;¹³ at 6 AM fill'd away and made sail, moderate gales at NNE, at 9 AM, made the land bearing South, distant 10 or 12 miles, at 9.30—braild up the Fore sail set the Square sail &ccc wind ENE as we ran along the land course West; saw a sail on the weather bow; At 10 AM course W by S & WSW, at 11 AM SSW 1/2 W round the Caycos which at Meridian bore S by W when we set the Course through SSW, Lat'd Obs'd 21°, 58' N, Long. in 72°, 31½' W.

Friday, Dec'r 11th¹⁴ Moderate breezes at NE Course SSW, 25 miles at 3 PM the SW-point of the Little Caycos bore per Compass East, it being hazey supposed its distance to be about 12 miles; Spoke the ship Clio of and from Portland¹⁵ 17 days out—[p. 2] bound to New Orleans, we pass'd by her like a shot very close, her Captain seem'd very much alarm'd, as we were all hands at quarters, no doubt he supposed us to be one of those vessels who under the Patriot flags of South America plunder all nations indiscriminately,¹⁶ & was very glad to get clear of us. Until 7 PM course S by W, 32 miles to 11 PM, SSW to 3 AM. SW, & SW by S until 8 AM—At 7 AM saw the land above Cape Nicola mole in the Island of Hayti bearing per Compass E by N, 10 or 12 leagues at 8 Cape Maize¹⁷ on the Island of Cuba in sight, at 9 it bore N by E dis't 5 or 6 leagues from whence we take a **Thermometer 81°, 82°, 81°.**¹⁸ fresh departure & steer per Compass to Meridian W, & W by S; Lat'd Obs'd 19°, 43' N Long'e 74° 58' W—

Sat'y Dec'r 12th Pleasant breezes at ENE Course W by S; WSW: Cuba in sight at 7 leagues distance, high land, at 5 AM **Thermometer 80°, 82°, 81°** saw a three masted Schooner standing inshore upon the wind, went to quarters & pass'd within gunshot of her. Lat'd Obs'd 19°, 38' N.—

¹³ Caicos Islands, member of the Bahama group.

¹⁴ All dates are in the margin of the original manuscript Journal. The Editor has placed them here in Italics for the convenience of the reader.

¹⁵ Apparently Portland, Maine. Many New England vessels were making more or less regular trips to New Orleans at this period, trading foodstuffs and manufactured goods for cotton and sugar.

¹⁶ Reference is to the privateers then operating under flags of the new Republics of Spanish America which engaged in their struggle for independence. Many of these vessels were accused of engaging in piracy under cover of their privateer commissions, and they were greatly feared by unarmed merchant vessels.

¹⁷ Cape Maysi.

¹⁸ All items inserted thus in the printed text are written in the margins of the mapuscript Journal.

Sund'y 13th Light airs & variable, At 8 AM Cape Cruz¹⁹ bore North dist'ce 7 leagues Course per compass W by N, at Meridian Cape Cruz bore ENE dist. 10 leagues & Cayman brack²⁰ **Thermometer 80, 82, 80** East point N 87° W, dis't 90 miles; it bears from Cape Cruz N 88° W, dist'ce 114 miles. Lat'd Obs'd 19°, 39' N, Var'on 9°, E

Mond'y 14th Fresh breezes to the Northward these 24 hours run 158 miles between NW by N & W by N: At Meridian, Puente de St Juan²¹ bore N 1/2 E dist'ce 36 miles; the SW point of the Isle of Pines N, 81° W, 134 miles Cape St. Antonio from the SW point of the Isle of Pines N 74° W, 116 miles The NE pass of the Mississippi bears from Cape St Antonio N 46° W, 608 miles from Ship to Cape St Antonio N, 73° W, 255 miles, the whole distance from the Ship to the mouth of the Mississippi 863 miles— I have been more particular in this days work as we have found the Charts very defective, Cape St Antonio & all the head lands on the Island of Cuba are laid down in them, 20 miles to the Eastward of their true Longitude; the only Chart **Thermometer 74°, 74°, 74°** onboard any way near correct is one copied from a Chart of the Spanish Survey²²—Lat'd Obs'd 21°, 01' N Long'e in 80°, 32' W variation 8° East—

Tuesd. 15th Light airs at NE, at 9 AM made the land about **Thermometer 76°, 78°, 76°** the Yardinillos²³ at Meridian the Isle of Pines bore NW, 11 leagues. Lat'd Obs'd 21°, 11' N—Long'e 82°, 30' W—

Wed'y 16th Light airs to the Eastward At 2h. 30' PM, the SW, Bluff of the Isle of Pines bore N, 33 miles distant, the cur't seting to the E'd 1/2 a know per hour Lat'd Obs'd 21°, 34' N **Thermometer 78, 80, 79** Long'e in 84°, 13' W. Var'on per Azimuth 9°, 25' East—Cape Corrientes²⁴ bearing N 28° W dist'ce 8 leagues—

Thursd'y 17th Winds variable from N to ENE, & fair weather, steerd W by S, until 8 AM the cur't seting to the NW

¹⁹ On the southeastern coast of Cuba.

²⁰ The correct spelling is "brac".

²¹ On Island of Cuba.

²² This remark indicates that the old Spanish surveys of the West Indian waters were the best to be had at that date, and that United States vessels sailed by them.

²³ Correct spelling is "Jardinillos"; islands off the south coast of Cuba.

²⁴ Near the western tip of Cuba.

1 mile per hour, when the land not being insight from the mast
Thermometer 73°, 76°, 74°—head, we consider'd ourselves to
be in the Straits of Yucatan & hauld up NW by N. Lat'd Obs'd 22°, 11' N. Long'e in 86°, 13' W

[p. 3] *December Friday 18th* Variable winds with squalls.
Thermometer 72° 74° 73° & heavy rain, cur't seting NW,
Course NW by N. Lat'd by Acc't 23°, 27' N. No observation

Saturd. 19th Variable winds from N to W with squalls
and heavy rain—Lat'd Obs'd 25°, 22', N Long'e in 87°, 59' W.
Thermometer 70°, 70°, 70°. Allowing that the cur't has set due
North at 1 mile per hour for the
last 48 hours it would not put us in the Latitude Obs'd but as in
my opinion it runs NNW I give it that course, which puts us in
the above mentioned Longitude By my calculation the NE en-
trance of the Mississippi bears N, 15° W, distance 239 miles

Sunday 20th First part squally with rain, hove too in a
Ther'r 66°, 68°, 64° heavy gale to the Southeastward No ob-
servation

Monday 21st First part heavy gales laying too under close
reefd Fore sail, at 2 PM made sail, course made good N ½ W
124 miles; no obser'on

Tuesd'y 22nd Strong gales from E to SE with rain & heavy
thunder & lightning—run W by N 70 miles sounded every two
Thermometer 64°, 68°, 65° hours, until we got soundings in
60 fathoms grey sand with specks
& broken shells, at 7h, 30'—sounded in 27 fathoms grey sand &
broken shells, the NE pass of the Mississippi bearing SW of us,
at 9 AM the wind shifted to WSW—the grand Gosier²⁵ one of
the Chandeleur Islands I presume bears of us NW by N about
9 or 10 leagues, lessen'd our soundings to 20 fathoms soft muddy
bottom

Wednes'y 23rd Fresh breezes to the N. & W'd at 1 PM a
Pilot came onboard out of the boat John Hope of Belize²⁶ & bore
away for the SE pass of the Mississippi SW by S, at 3 PM
sounded in 20 fathoms muddy bottom approaching to clay, at
5 PM anchor'd & lay all night, at 6 AM got underway with light

²⁵ Grand Gosier, now reduced to a small reef.

²⁶ The old pilot station where seagoing vessels took on pilots to steer them over the bars
at the mouth of the Mississippi. It is now entirely gone.

airs at NE, steer'd in South, direct for the vessels anchor'd without the Bar of the SE pass of Belize, passing through the ripple made by the current from the NE pass, which is very intimidating to strangers, but no danger exists, & by some very low mud banks²⁷ less than a mile from us; At 8 AM the site of the new light house²⁸ bore W by N 1½ miles, steering in S by E jibed ship and hauld up NW by N; At 9h, 15' we pass'd the bar in 13 feet water stirng up the mud all the way,²⁹ we drawing 12½ feet water aft—There are two small mud banks (in a line with the masts of a sunken vessel)³⁰ which you must go round, which serves as an excellent mark to cross the Bar, which is only a quarter of a mile broad, on the shoalest part of which is a beacon, which you must keep half a point on the starboard bow & run past it at the distance of 60 or 80 fathoms At 9h. 30' AM the Block house³¹ bore W by N at 10 AM runing in W by N, we were boarded by the Pilots, & Custom-house boats;³² at 10½ AM course up NW, at 11, W to SW, at 12 NW, keeping the weather or Northern shore onboard following the meanders of the river

Here ends the Nautical day

[p. 4]

Observations

On entering the Mississippi, (which in the language of the aborigines of the country is calld "Messachipi" which signifies the Father of waters) the mind naturally expands in contemplating the destiny which awaits it; the only grand outlet to the increasing commerce of an Empire, equal now to many, & at no distant period will be superior in wealth, population, & resources

²⁷ Reference is to the mud lumps near the entrance to the Mississippi.

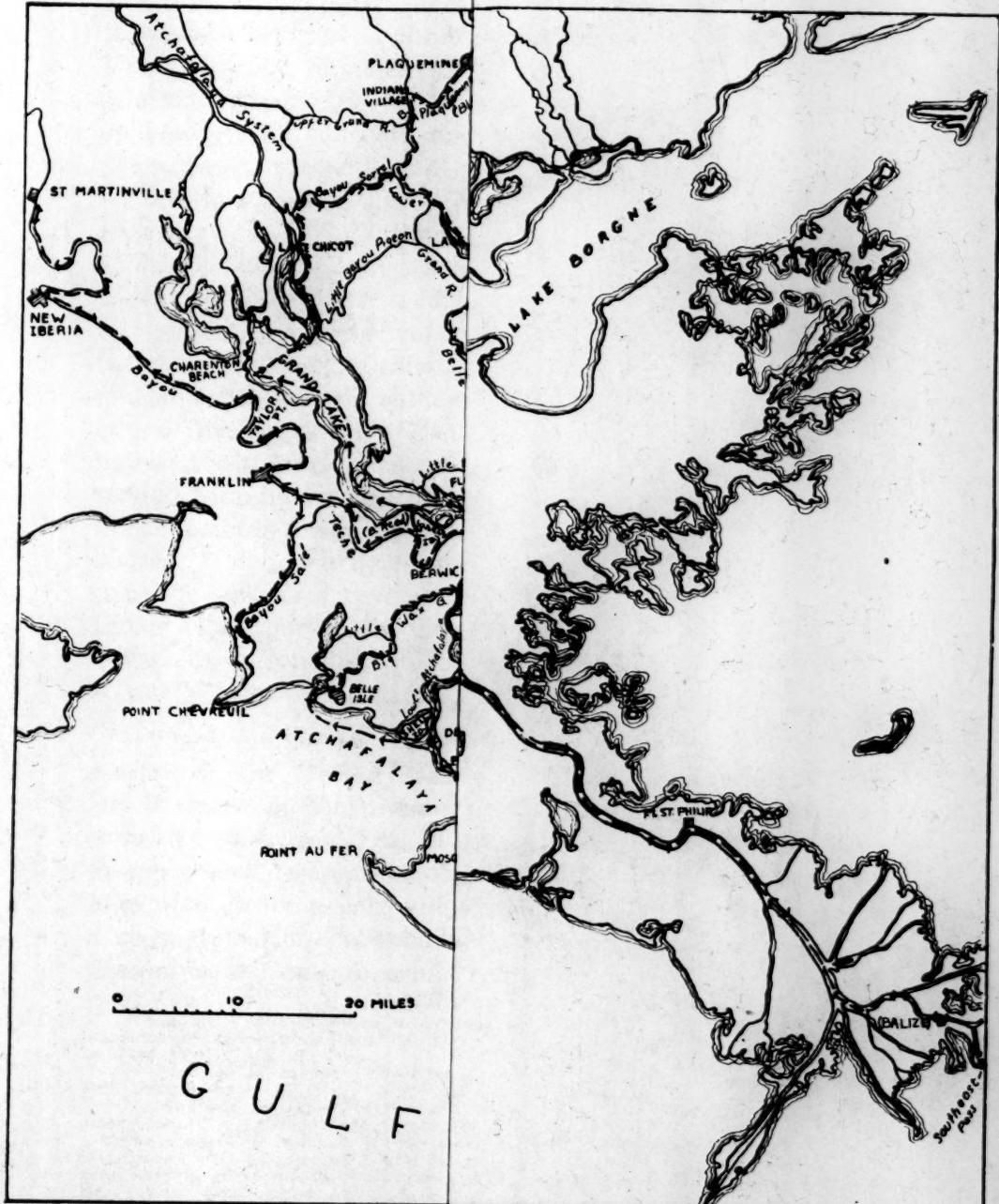
²⁸ An adequate lighthouse at the mouth of the Mississippi had long been needed. Some plans had been made prior to the War of 1812, but it was not until after the close of that war that very much progress was made in the matter. In 1816 Daniel T. Patterson, H. S. B. Latrobe and P. L. B. Duplessis, Jr. were appointed commissioners to make a complete survey of the mouths of the river and to make recommendations for the erection of a suitable lighthouse. Their report, dated at New Orleans, November 12, 1816, recommended a brick lighthouse at an estimated cost of between \$80,000 and \$90,000. In 1818 the Louisiana Legislature passed "An Act to authorize the Governor of this State to cede to the United States the jurisdiction over Frank's Island, near the north-east pass, at the mouth of the Mississippi River, for the purpose of building a Light-house." Congress appropriated \$54,995 for the project, and by 1820 the new lighthouse was complete, the total cost being \$85,507.56. This new lighthouse was under construction when Cathcart's party came to Louisiana, and it is to this structure that he refers. (*American State Papers, Commerce and Navigation*, II, 43-46, 460; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1818, p. 40.)

²⁹ The course followed by the *Nonesuch* over the bar at the mouth of the Mississippi is now unused by large vessels.

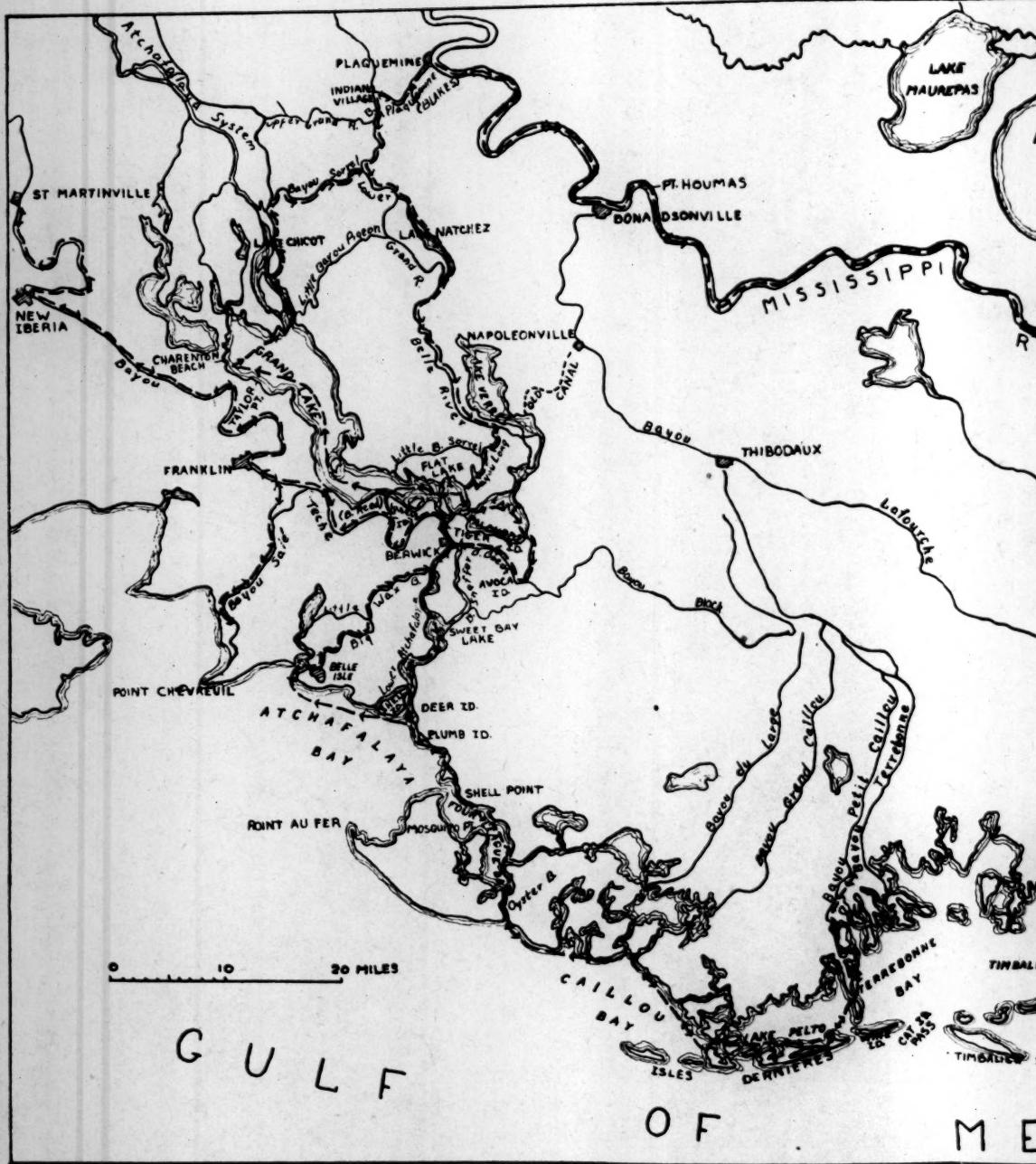
³⁰ The shallow waters off the mouths of the Mississippi were a real "graveyard" for ships in those days.

³¹ Reference is to the old Spanish blockhouse at the Belize, which continued to serve as a lighthouse and as headquarters for the bar pilots until the new lighthouse was completed.

³² Previous to the erection of the new lighthouse the United States customs officers maintained their headquarters at the old Spanish blockhouse, removing to the new lighthouse as soon as it was completed.



These present-day
naturalists are enclosed in
parenthesis



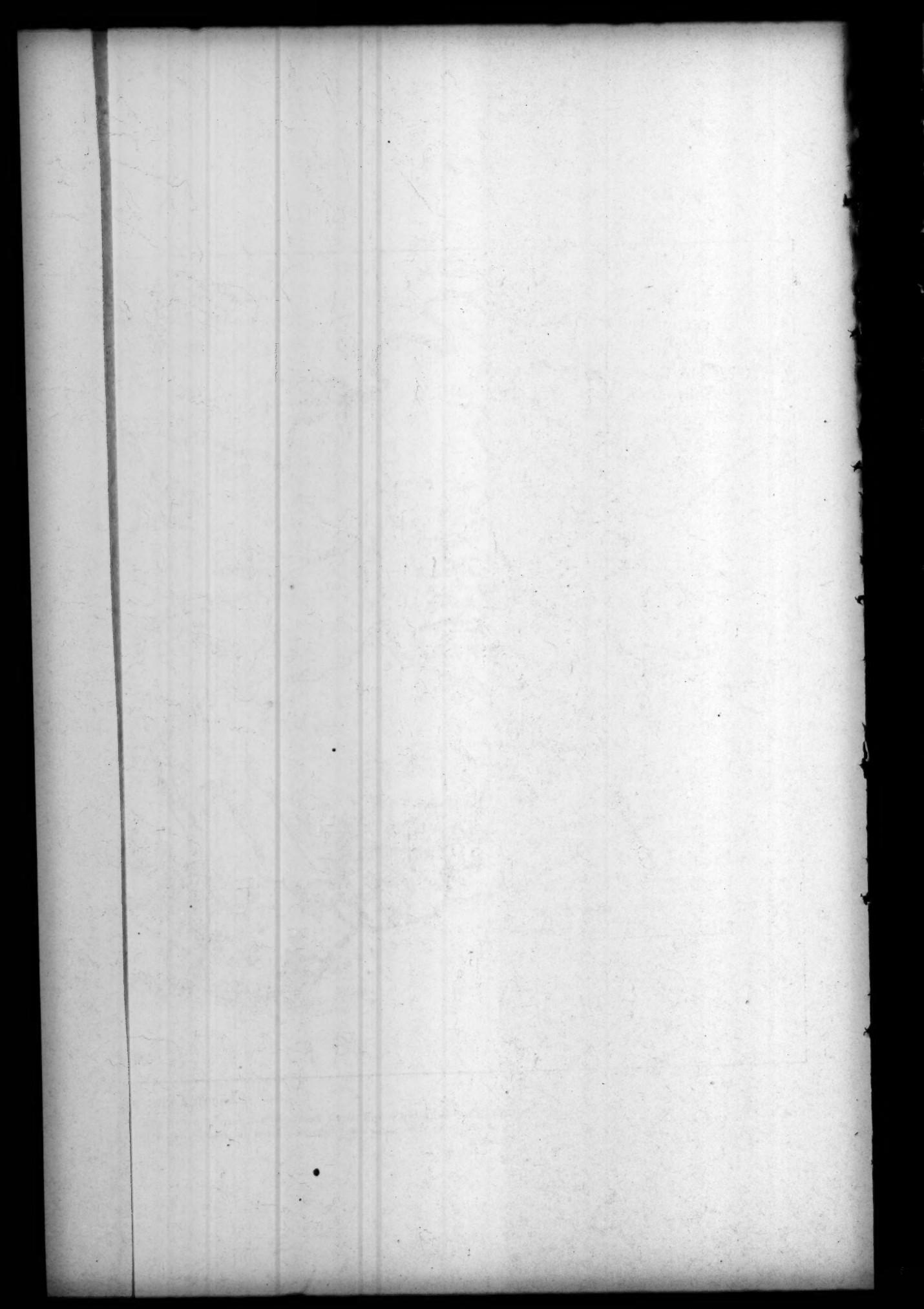
CATHCART'S ROUTES I

The major routes are indicated by dashed lines. No attempt is made to natural conditions; it is somewhat more detailed in areas visited by Cathcart. (parentheses).



PLACES IN LOUISIANA

made to show all the minor traverses. The map represents present-day
outcrop. Names are modern with the exception of a few that are enclosed in



to any in Europe, Russia alone excepted, of which New Orleans will from necessity continue to be the Emporium;³³ How lamentable it is, that this city, does not possess the advantages necessary to make it what it ought to be, the first commercial City in the Universe; but impeded as it is, by a shallow bar, subject to inundation from the rising of its waters, visited annually by an epidemic,³⁴ the consequences thereof, & want of other necessary precautions, protected only by a parapet, or leveé, to prevent its overflow, which has several times taken place, Merchants & Planters will be unwilling to let their property remain there a sufficient time to take advantage of the best markets; a bustle & sacrifice of property, consequently takes place, & will continue so, while the same causes exists, & it is impossible to remove them, until the population & wealth of the State, & the wisdom of the legislature, is sufficient to make all the improvements, of which the Bar & City is susceptible, which will not be the case before the majority are native Americans, either from, or descended from natives of the Northern & eastern states;³⁵ at present improvements are neglected & enterprize is confind to the gaming houses, which are licensed by the municipality, & from which the City collects a revenue for the support of the poor,³⁶ & thus virtue is supported by vice, morality in this City is in a very low state, & concubinism is not only tolerated, but the laws are so model'd as to in a great measure sanction it

There cannot be the least doubt, that Pensacola in the possession of the United States³⁷ will in time divide the trade of the Western & Southwestern country with New Orleans, & become its most powerful rival,³⁸ as I do not propose writing a geographical description of this country, I refer to the general Map of them in which will be seen how practicable it is to open a communication between many of the western waters, & the Escambia, & Conecuh, whose confluence is at the head of Pensa-

³³ Cathcart's impressions as to the future importance of New Orleans as a great commercial metropolis were the same as those of all other travelers who ascended the Mississippi in those days.

³⁴ Reference is to the yellow fever, then much dreaded by all the newcomers to New Orleans.

³⁵ Like most Americans of that day, Cathcart had a poor opinion of the industry and enterprise of the native French Creoles.

³⁶ He refers to two acts of the Louisiana Legislature, passed in 1814, which provided that licenses paid by gambling houses in New Orleans, and fines collected for violations of the acts, were to go to the support of the Charity Hospital and the Charitable Society of that city. (*Laws of Louisiana*, 1814, pp. 104-106; 1814-15, pp. 22-24.)

³⁷ The treaty between the United States and Spain by which the United States acquired the Floridas and the western boundary of the Louisiana Purchase was finally agreed upon was under negotiation when Cathcart was writing this statement.

³⁸ Pensacola has not measured up to Cathcart's predictions as a great commercial rival of New Orleans.

cola bay, which either as a naval depot, or place of commercial deposite for foreign commerce, possesses advantages infinitely superior to New Orleans, or any other port between it, & the Chesapeake.

At the mouth of the river were immense numbers of Pelicans, Cormorants, gulls, wild geese, & ducks, & other aquatic birds & some Porpusses were wantoning round us, as we saild along its margin, at the distance of from ten to fifty yards from an immense raft of old trees, which have been wash'd away & brought down by the current in extraordinary freshes,³⁹ & are grounded on each side for several miles, those trees excepted, & which at this season are stationary, the river is perfectly clear of incumbrance, while the current now runs down at the rate of one to two miles per hour (but sometimes five or six) notwithstanding it ebbs, & flows, as high up as New Orleans & raises from twelve [p. 5] to eighteen inches perpendicular, which may seem extraordinary, when the rapidity of the current always running down, & its distance from the sea is considered.

The soil along its banks is alluvion & produces nothing but reeds, sedge & some willow as high up as Fort St. Philips or Plaquemine,⁴⁰ below which we saw the first Alligator which we fired at & wounded, but it escaped into the water & went down tail foremost—

Thursday 24th of Dec'r Course up NW at 3h. 30' PM was abreast of Fort St Philips 43 miles from the mouth of the river & 24 from the passes where the river divides into three parts, which makes the Delta, & is 19 miles from its mouth; the reach above Fort St Philips runs SW to SSW. at 3h.45' jibed ship, with light airs at NE & run up WSW to W. at 2 AM came too with a kedge opposite Johnsons plantation,⁴¹ & at 6 AM sent on shore to purchase a Turkey & some other articles for our Christmas dinner; at 9 AM got underway & steer'd NW, the Courses are from N by W to SSW consequently a NE or SE wind will bring

³⁹ Freshets or floods in the Mississippi River.

⁴⁰ The old Spanish Fort St. Philip, about sixty miles below New Orleans, was often called "Fort Plaquemine" in the official documents at that period. Fort Jackson, on the opposite side of the Mississippi, was not begun until 1822. The old term has been preserved in the name of Plaquemines Parish, in which the forts are located. (*American State Papers, Military Affairs*, I, 175, 430, 790, 820; IV, 373, 374.)

⁴¹ William H. Johnson and George Braddish owned extensive properties on the Mississippi below New Orleans at that period. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 314, 324, 328, 335.)

a vessel up from the Belize to the English turn;⁴² from Johnsons plantation, the land is higher, intermix'd with some indifferent plantations, on which we saw some Orange trees, sugar cane, & large Corn stalks, with the ears turn'd down, to prevent the numerous birds from eating the corn which seems to indicate that its owner is too lazy to take it in, in larger quantities than for daily use⁴³—

Friday 25th At 11 AM, we enter'd the English turn 48 miles from Fort St Philips & 17 from New Orleans; here the land is better cultivated, & the plantations look better; before 12 a Monkey which we had onboard, seeing the vessel so near the trees jump'd from the Foretopsail yard hoisted up, thinking to reach them, but he fell in the river & swam ashore, he was chased by the sailors when he took to the water again, & was caught by the people in the boat, but afterwards deserted again in the same manner, & put himself under the protection of a french lady; this proves that the Ape species have not so great an antipathy to the water as is generally imagined

Saturd'y 26th At 7 AM we got underway again, & commenced tracking⁴⁴ the vessel through the English turn, which tends round from NNW to ENE, consequently no one wind will bring a vessel through, & they are obliged to track, & occasionally to anchor in light airs, or when the wind is contrary; we anchor'd several times during the night.

Sund'y 27th We got underway at daylight & at 8 AM anchor'd opposite to New Orleans 108 miles from the mouth of the SE pass of the river At 11 AM, we went onshore & call'd upon Comodore Patterson⁴⁵ at his house & deliver'd him letters from the Navy department

Mond'y 28th Waited on Com'e Patterson at his office, who is of opinion, that we ought to take passage in the Steam boat for

⁴² The English Turn, about eighteen miles below New Orleans, was a very difficult section of the river for sailing vessels to negotiate, and it was necessary for such vessels to be towed through this bend in those days. In 1817 the Louisiana Legislature passed "An Act granting to James Rinker the sole privilege of towing vessels through the English Turn, for a limited time," by which he obtained a monopoly of that service for twenty years, the act stipulating the fees which he might charge. (*Laws of Louisiana, 1816-17*, pp. 56-58.)

⁴³ Visitors to Louisiana and other southern states are quick to notice differences in agricultural practices. It is customary here to grow single ear corn, top the stalks, and turn down the ears. This practice results in the dehydration of the grain without molding or rotting. The tops are fed green to the cattle. Thus, to an outsider not familiar with this practice, it appears to be a lazy way of storing corn.

⁴⁴ Tracking here is equivalent to "towing".

⁴⁵ Captain Daniel Todd Patterson was the United States naval officer then in command of the New Orleans station. See *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 301-302, for the best brief biography of this officer.

Plaquemine,⁴⁶ & take [p. 6] the cutter in tow, & by all means join Mr Hutton⁴⁷ at Franklin upon Teche (according to the purport of the letter which he left for me) and from thence, commence the first Survey to the westward during the winter; Took passage in the Steam boat Governor Sheldon,⁴⁸ which will depart on Saturday, & is the first that proceeds up the river—

Tuesd'y 29th I gave my instructions from the Secretary of the Navy to copy as I wish him to know their contents (to Com'e Patterson) who said the boat should be got ready immediately, & that he would send acting Lieut Marchand,⁴⁹ who is a native of Louisiana to agree for the towing of the boat to Plaquemine, in order to save time, & to have the people fresh when we arrived there; both the Commodore & Marchand made the requisite enquiry, but the Capt'n of the Steamboat demanded 100 dollars to tow the boat & people, consequently, the idea was drop'd; the inhabitants here in general do not scruple to impose upon the Officers of government, when they have an opportunity, & ask treble the sum for any service, that they would take from an individual, & ridicule the idea of treating them with the same good faith, & neither consider the honor, or responsibility of the officer⁵⁰—

In New Orleans are now 192 vessels waiting for freight⁵¹ and 20 Steam boats trading up the Mississippi & its waters, but not one down, notwithstanding one or two might be employ'd very advantageously between this & the Belize & Mobile, there are many more building & it is supposed that next year double

⁴⁶ He means the head of Bayou Plaquemine, about twenty miles below Baton Rouge, at which point the town of Plaquemine, parish seat of Iberville, has since developed.

⁴⁷ James Hutton was the other Navy Agent appointed to act with Cathcart in making the survey of live oak and cedar timber on the public lands in Louisiana and the Alabama Territory. From letters in the Appendix to the Journal it appears that he was already in Louisiana, and that he then was or had previously been a resident of the Attakapas region. A diligent search has failed to uncover any additional information on his career.

⁴⁸ He means the steamboat *Governor Shelby*, which was a vessel of about ninety tons, built about 1817 and named in honor of Isaac Shelby, a prominent governor of Kentucky. John T. Gray was captain of this steamboat, which was built for the Louisville and New Orleans trade. (*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana* [2 vols., Chicago, 1892], II, 38; Alcée Fortier, ed., *Louisiana* [3 vols., Atlanta, 1914], II, 506.)

⁴⁹ Nicholas Marchand was acting naval lieutenant at the New Orleans station at this date. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 591.)

⁵⁰ This appears to be Cathcart's first experience in the matter of exorbitant charges asked for service to government agents in Louisiana. Further on in the Journal he makes several references to this trait of the inhabitants, which greatly annoyed him.

⁵¹ Cathcart arrived in New Orleans just when the cotton and sugar crops were coming to market, as the low stage of water in the Mississippi and its tributaries had delayed the arrival of crops in market. This probably accounts for the large number of seagoing vessels then in port awaiting cargos. The extent of the commerce of New Orleans at this period is indicated by the fact that the value of exports from New Orleans in 1818 was \$16,771,711. (*DeBow's Review*, VII, 415.)

the number will be employ'd;⁵² they are not so elegant as ours, but are commodious enough & are large & strong, their hold being calculated to carry a cargo, their accommodations are all on deck, & resemble the Poop of a first rate ship of the line—The merchants & planters have suffer'd considerably this season, in consequence of its unprecedented drought which has rendered the tributary streams of the river unnavigable, the banks of the Ohio, & many other streams are crowded with cotton, sugar, tobacco & other merchandize waiting for the waters to raise, which has just commenced, & business begins to wear a brighter aspect, which is visible in the countenances of every class of people,⁵³ the poor African & native slave excepted⁵⁴—

Wednes'y 30th I waited on the Navy Agent⁵⁵ & Collector⁵⁶ on business, & was caught in a heavy shower of rain, with loud peals of thunder & vivid lightning, which compleatly drench'd me, & was up to the knees in mud, the streets being unpaved & composed of a clay & muddy soil, the least rain makes them as slippery as soap, & nearly impassible on foot;⁵⁷ call'd at the Post office & was inform'd that the mails come in on Wednesday, Friday & Sunday in 23 days from Washington, & go out on the following days⁵⁸

Wrote to the Navy Dept't & Navy Commissioners, (see A No 9 dated Jan'y 1st 1819)⁵⁹

⁵² This was a period of rapid expansion of the steamboat traffic on the Mississippi and its tributaries, and the number of steamboats in service was increasing very rapidly. However, most of the produce still came down the river in flatboats, barges and keelboats. During the year ending October 1, 1817, 1,500 flatboats and 500 barges loaded with produce came down the Mississippi to the New Orleans market. Steamboats soon began to take over a large part of the downstream commerce, as well as most of that upstream; in 1821 only 174 barges and keelboats and 441 flatboats arrived at New Orleans with cargoes, while in that year 287 steamboats arrived in port with produce from above. (*DeBow's Review*, VII, 415-416.)

⁵³ Farmers and planters of the Mississippi Valley in those days were entirely dependent upon the depth of water in the rivers, and when a rise in the water following a drought enabled them to float their crops to market, it was a welcome event for both producers and merchants.

⁵⁴ This is Cathcart's first revelation of his strong antislavery feelings, which he emphasizes by several later entries in the Journal.

⁵⁵ John K. Smith, a native of Maryland, was Navy Agent in New Orleans at this date. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 588; *ibid.*, *Miscellaneous*, II, 351.)

⁵⁶ Beverly Chew, a native of Virginia, was collector of customs at New Orleans at this date. (*American State Papers, Finance*, III, 576; *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., 1789-1800)

⁵⁷ All visitors to New Orleans at that date complained of the muddy and unpaved streets and the lack of sidewalks. The first bond issue for paving was in 1822, and not much paving was done until a decade or more later. (John S. Kendall, *History of New Orleans*, I, 117.)

⁵⁸ Agitation for more speedy and frequent mail service between New Orleans and Washington and the Atlantic seaboard cities had been continuous almost from the date of the acquisition of Louisiana by the United States, and this was a matter of keen interest in both governmental and commercial circles. However, it was not until December 1831 that daily mail service was inaugurated from New Orleans towards the East. Thomas B. Johnson was postmaster at New Orleans in 1819, at which date that office ranked seventh in the United States in the amount of postal receipts. (*American State Papers, Post Office Department*, 28, 30, 35-36, 39-40, 92-93, 351; *ibid.*, *Miscellaneous*, I, 739; II, 273, 467, 468, 470, 535-537.)

⁵⁹ Reference to Appendix to this Journal.

[p. 7] *Thurs'y 31st* I waited on Com'e Patterson to make arrangements for our departure; he order'd Lieut. Marchand to prepare the boat with everything necessary. I ask'd him for an Octant as the Surveyor had neglected to purchase one at Baltimore, altho I had directed him so to do, Marchand ans'd he would take his own Sextant; I ask'd him what Camp equipage he had, he answer'd an Iron pot which was only sufficient to boil the peoples beef; I therefore purchased some cooking utensils & etc. for our own use, & enquired if he had a compass, & every other necessary for the survey in the boat, he answer'd in the affirmative, as well as Arms & ammunition sufficient for all the men & that he would leave the city on Saturday the 2nd of January 1819—

1819 Friday Jan'y 1st I wrote a note to the Com'e to day being a holyday, giving him the information which I had receiv'd from Mr. Randal⁶⁰ one of the State Legislators (with whom I lodged) relative to the state of the waters of Lafourche, & Plaquemine,⁶¹ the rest of the day I spent in procuring information from intelligent gentlemen, to whom I was introduced.

Saturd'y 2nd I communicated to the Com'e that there was water enough to enter Lafourche at Donaldsonville, but not sufficient, in the canal which communicates between it & Lake Verrett,⁶² that to go down to where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico, at the eastern extremity of Timballier bay, would be circuitous & dangerous as from thence it would be necessary to go to the mouth of the Atchafalaia, into which the Teche empties,

⁶⁰ David A. Randall was long a prominent leader in Ascension Parish. He was the son of Thomas Randall, an Englishman by birth, who had emigrated to Louisiana under the Spanish regime and followed the mercantile business in New Orleans for many years, but in 1815 he purchased a plantation on the east bank of the Mississippi in Ascension Parish, adjoining that later owned by Duncan F. Kenner. David A. Randall was an attorney of Donaldsonville. He represented his parish in the House, 1819-1824, and in the Senate, 1828-1832. He was again a member of the House in 1846, when he served as Speaker, but he resigned from the Legislature to accept appointment as Judge of the Fifth Judicial District. After serving for about a decade as Judge, he was again elected to the House, being the oldest member of that body in 1861. In 1822 he was appointed one of six commissioners to raise by lottery funds for improving the navigation of Bayou Lafourche, and in 1825 he was named as one of five commissioners to locate the seat of government at Donaldsonville and to provide for the erection of a suitable State Capitol there. He was a candidate for the governorship in 1830, but did not receive a very large vote. (*Louisiana House Journals*, 1819-24, 1846, 1857-61, *passim*; *Louisiana Senate Journals*, 1828-32, *passim*; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1822, pp. 42-44; 1824-25, pp. 200-202; *Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet*, February 13, March 16, 1861.)

⁶¹ There were two alternate water routes from the Mississippi to Bayou Teche in those days. One was through Bayou Lafourche and the canal from that bayou to Lake Verrett; the other was through Bayou Plaquemine and other connecting water courses. Cathcart's party followed the latter route.

⁶² This canal linking Bayou Lafourche with Lake Verrett, so as to afford a continuous waterway from the Mississippi to the Teche, had been under construction for many years. The Territorial Legislature passed acts concerning this canal in 1806, 1807, and 1809; and in 1814 the State Legislature passed an act providing for raising \$15,000 by lottery for the improvement of this canal. (*Acts of Orleans Territory*, 1806, pp. 92-94; 1807, pp. 136-138; 1809, pp. 32-34; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1814, pp. 66-68.)

by sea, a distance of more than 100 miles, & we were of opinion, that our boat which is only a six oar'd cutter, is by no means calculated for such a cruize, in her present embarrass'd state, loaded with baggage, arms, Provisions for a month for ten men,⁶³ & other requisites, which brought her to within six inches of the water, & consequently could not stand a gale on the seaboard, we therefore determined to go by the way of Plaquemine, if the water has risen sufficient, but this is uncertain, as no confidence can be placed in the information which we have receiv'd, it is so full of contradiction, no two people tells the same story, & Lieu't Marchand although, he has been this rout before, either does not remember or through true french volatility, give himself time to think of it—

I went onboard the hulk at Meridian, & found the boat alongside very deep, & requested the officer to have slides put in the rowlocks, he answer'd that there was no occasion, that he knew what to do with a boat, & that he had everything onboard & was ready to make sail, I then directed him to proceed to Donaldsonville, & to there ascertain whether there was water enough in the canal, which runs into Lake Verret to float the boat, if there was to remain there until the Steam boat came up, & if in the day, to hoist his pendant over his ensign as a signal for us to come onshore, & if in the night to [p. 8] keep a watch & come off & take us out, & if there was not, to proceed to Plaquemine & haul the boat over to Blakes,⁶⁴ or farther if necessary & there await out arrival; this plan was the best I could adopt, under existing circumstances, in such a dearth of correct information, & so many contradictions to test; I recommended dispatch, wish'd him a pleasant passage, & at 1 PM he proceeded up the Mississippi with a fine fair breeze

Sunday 3rd I dined in company with the Rev'd Mr Davis,⁶⁵ who had been a Missionary in the Atakapa country⁶⁶ for some

⁶³ This statement indicates the size of the Cathcart party.

⁶⁴ William Blake, a native of County Galway, Ireland, owned a tract of 400 superficial arpents on the left bank of Bayou Plaquemine in the County of Iberville, under a Spanish grant of July 1, 1794. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 303-304; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, I, 295.)

⁶⁵ Reverend (or Elder) Benjamin Davis (or Davies) was pastor of the Baptist Church in New Orleans in 1819. He came to New Orleans in 1818 from the First Baptist Church at Natchez, Mississippi, as successor to Reverend James A. Raynoldson, who had organized the Baptist Church in New Orleans but left to accept a pastorate at St. Francisville. Davis performed the first baptismal rites in New Orleans in 1820, in the Mississippi River in front of the Customhouse. He left New Orleans that same year and the Baptists became apathetic and soon disbanded, only to be revived several years later. No information on Davis's missionary activities in the Attakapas country has been found but it is known that there were many Baptists and other Protestant ministers who made trips to that region prior to 1818. (John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists of Louisiana* [Shreveport, 1923], 62; *A Reproduction of the Minutes of the Mississippi Baptist Association from its Organization in 1806 to the Present Time* [New Orleans, 1849], 60, 66.)

⁶⁶ The term "Attakapas country" was in those days applied to the region west of lower Bayou Teche.

time, he gave a less contradictory account of the Geography, & other particulars relative to that country than any other gentleman I had convers'd with—

Monday 4th Took leave of the Commodore, call'd at the Post office expecting answers from Mr Freeman⁶⁷ the Surveyor gen'l to letters sent to him from the Navy department, Land Office & myself in last November but did not find any—At Meridian embark'd onboard the Steam boat Gov'r Sheldon, but did not leave the wharf until 4 PM, at 8 stopt at Kenners⁶⁸ 18 miles from town to take in wood; we are propell'd by a 33 horse power, but I am of opinion that we do not progress more than four miles an hour against the current—Mrs. Randolph⁶⁹ & family were onboard, & a curious medly of foreigners who had just arrived & were going to settle at Opelousas,⁷⁰ among them were two families very interesting, the one French, direct from Nantz,⁷¹ the other Irish, the former with true french levity play'd on the guitar, & sung several airs very well, & endeavour'd to be, or at least to seem to be happy; but the Irish lady was by far the handsomest, had anxiety depicted upon her countenance, divided as it were between hope & despair, she seem'd to expect to find an assylum in these wilds, yet doubted its probability, they both had several children & look'd as if they had seen better days; Mrs. Randolph took a good deal of notice of the latter; the others were of the lower order, seem'd perfectly content, crack'd their jokes, eat hearty, went to sleep, & snored loudly, the whole tenor of their conduct, seem'd to say, it is all world! I must work for my living, & whether I work in France, Brabant, or Louisiana provided I get enough to eat & drink, it is very immaterial! I was pleased with one old French man, who had a cage full of Goldfinches & canary birds, with which he intended to make his fortune, as he said he was inform'd that there were none of those species in North America, & that in a few years he would raise

⁶⁷ Thomas Freeman was at that time Surveyor General of the United States. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 388.)

⁶⁸ Present Town of Kenner. In 1777 George Kenner purchased a plantation at the German Coast, on the east side of the Mississippi, having two arpents front by a depth of forty arpents. His widow was confirmed in possession of the tract by the United States government after his death. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 379.)

⁶⁹ Probably the wife of Peter Randolph, formerly a resident of Lunenburg County, Virginia, and Judge of the Virginia Court of Appeals, who removed with his family and slaves to Wilkinson County, Mississippi, in 1819 and settled near Woodville.

⁷⁰ Term applied in those days to the district west of the Atchafalaya, north of the Attakapas district, and south of Natchitoches. The Post of Opelousas was the seat of local government in that district in the Spanish period. The name is preserved in the town of Opelousas, parish seat of St. Landry.

⁷¹ Nantes, France.

enough to supply the whole United States; I wish'd him success, & thought it would be a pity, & indeed a sin, to destroy his hopes, by undeceiving him, he, poor fellow, will find his expectations have been too sanguine, time enough, I hope however, not before he finds some better & more lucrative employment—⁷² The first course up, was South & the next WSW, but as it soon became dark, & was very cold I went [p. 9] into the Cabin to enjoy—the conversation of Mrs Randolph & her amiable daughter,⁷³ & of the volatile Francoise, & melancholy Irish lady—

Tuesday 5th At 4 AM Lieu't Marchand came alongside in the boat, about 20 miles below Lafourche,⁷⁴ not being able to get any farther since the 2nd in consequence of the wind, & cur't being against him ever since the first day—The people were nearly exhausted, & Benj'n Bush⁷⁵ was half dead with cold, finding the impossibility of their rowing against the wind & cur't I desired the Captain to take the boat in tow, & order'd the people to come onboard to warm themselves, but Bush was not able to do duty until after our first departure from Franklin; At 8 AM we came too at Homuses,⁷⁶ 6 miles below Lafourche, to take in firewood, it froze very hard last night, & some of the passengers who had went ashore, brought onboard ice a quarter of an inch thick. At 9h.30' landed a man at Lafourche or Donaldsonville, this is an inconsiderable village of about 10 or 15 houses, on the left side of the river going up, as the navigation was not open here, we proceeded towards Plaquemine & pass'd a large raft of Cypress & Ash timber with six men on it, shielded from the inclemency of the weather by a temporary cabin cover'd with skins of different sorts;⁷⁷ the banks of the river are here well settled, & have many fine plantations on them; At 12h.30' enter'd between Island No 126⁷⁸ from the head of the Ohio, & the south shore, but was obliged to back out for want of water, & pass

⁷² The type of recent immigrants to Louisiana encountered by Cathcart on the steamboat might have been duplicated on almost any other steamboat going up the Mississippi from New Orleans at that date.

⁷³ If the Editor is correct in his guess that this is a daughter of Judge Peter Randolph (see footnote 69, above), reference is to either Sallie Anne or Augusta, who were the second and third children of that gentleman. Julianna and Cordelia, the other two daughters of Peter Randolph, were very young in 1819.

⁷⁴ Term often applied in those days to the village of Donaldsonville, located just below the head of Bayou Lafourche, on the west bank of the Mississippi.

⁷⁵ No other information about this individual, except that he was a member of Cathcart's party, has been found.

⁷⁶ Houmas, an old Indian settlement near the modern Ascension-St. James parish boundary, on the east side of the Mississippi. The Houmas plantation was sold in 1812 by Daniel Clark to General Wade Hampton, and in 1850's it passed into the hands of John Burnside of New Orleans, since which date it had been called Burnside.

⁷⁷ These rafts were probably bound to sawmills down the river. It is interesting to note the makeshift cabins on the rafts, similar to ordinary flatboat cabins.

⁷⁸ This Island is now completely gone.

between it, & the northern shore, pass'd by two more rafts, a brig & a schooner going down,⁷⁹ likewise the steam boat Louisiana, who saluted us with a Swivel⁸⁰ & we return'd the compliment; At 3 PM took in wood at Mr Pierces⁸¹ six miles below Plaquemine on the North side; at 5 PM disembark'd at Plaquemine an inconsiderable village of the same size as Lafourche,⁸² on the same side of the river, we put up at Mr Pipkins,⁸³ at the confluence of the river Plaquemine⁸⁴ & the Mississippi, which runs into the Atchafalaia, the latter is a branch⁸⁵ of the Mississippi, which enters⁸⁶ below Fort Adams⁸⁷ in Lat'd 30°, 57' N, and Long'e 16°, 40' W from Philadelphia & empties itself into the Bay of the same name which has an outlet into the Gulf of Mexico between Point au Fer, & point Chevreuil between which is a bar on which is nine feet water at very high tides, but in general there is only six or seven & sometimes even less—

The entrance of the Plaquemine was dry for four feet perpendicular, consequently the waters of the Mississippi must rise six or seven feet before it becomes navigable, when the water rushes in with irresistible force, especially in freshes occasion'd by heavy rains, & accumulation of water from other sources, in the upper country; At Blakes⁸⁸ to which it is necessary to haul our [p. 10] Boat over land, a distance of six or seven miles, the bed of the river, & surrounding land, is much lower, & retains sufficient water for boat & flat navigation at all seasons—

I was surprised to find that the man who furnish'd us with the means of hauling our boat to Blakes, was a native of Triest in the Adriatic (named Giovanni Zueritz,⁸⁹ who is married to a french Creole) he was formerly a Seaman, & traded to Turkey & the Barbary States, under the Imperial, & Ragurian flags,⁹⁰

⁷⁹ In those days ocean-going vessels often went as far up the Mississippi as Natchez to load cargoes of cotton and sugar at plantations along the river.

⁸⁰ A type of cannon mounted on boats.

⁸¹ One of the numerous woodyards on the banks of the Mississippi, which supplied wood for steamboats. As the number of steamboats increased, the demand for fuel for the boilers made this a very profitable employment for large numbers of men. Coal was not used for generating steam in steamboat boilers until late in the ante-bellum period.

⁸² Cathcart's name for the village of Donaldsonville.

⁸³ A tavern on the site of modern Plaquemine.

⁸⁴ Head of Bayou Plaquemine, where it leaves the Mississippi.

⁸⁵ The Atchafalaya is a distributary, not a "branch" of the Mississippi.

⁸⁶ He means "leaves" instead of "enters".

⁸⁷ An American fort built in 1798-1799 on the heights just above the 31st parallel, on the east side of the Mississippi, and named for President John Adams.

⁸⁸ On Bayou Plaquemine, about a mile above the modern Crescent. See footnote 64, above.

⁸⁹ This must be Giovanni Questi, who lived on Bayou Plaquemine. A few years later this man was granted by the Louisiana Legislature the exclusive privilege of maintaining a ferry across the lower branch of Bayou Plaquemine, four miles above its mouth. The name is so unusual that it can hardly be mistaken; Cathcart apparently spelled it phonetically. (*Laws of Louisiana*, 1822, pp. 106-108; 1823, p. 10.)

⁹⁰ Ragurian, applying to the Italian city of Ragusa.

he spoke the Turkish language tolerable well, & was as much surprised to find an American able to converse with him in the Italian, & Turkish idioms;⁹¹ this reminds me of the following turkish adage, Dag a dag conosmes; Adan, Adan conosceor! (ie) Men may encounter, but mountains can never meet!—

The passengers who came up with us in the Steam boat, went on before us, and hired a keel boat to take them to the Opelousas,⁹² as they did not stop in Atakapa as high up as St Martinsville where I made enquiry for them

Wednes'y 6th We were all day detain'd preparing new axle trees to carry our boat on, those of the waggons not being wide enough, the weather was damp, & cloudy, & threaten'd to rain, of which the ground was in much want

Thursd'y 7th Last night it rain'd incessantly, the wind blowing hard from E to SE. the owner of the oxen would not agree to start to day, the ground was so heavy with mud, & as slippery as soap, but with great persuasion, the weather having clear'd up at 2 AM we sett off with the boat drawn by four oxen, & a cart with our tents and baggage. I rode in the boat part of the way, & walk'd the rest; the people walk'd to save expense; At 6 PM we arrived at Blakes (now Brown's)⁹³ & launch'd our boat into the Plaquemine down a bank 25 feet high, above the level of the water from the summit; this is the highest land I have seen in this vicinity, but it does not extend far; for the carriage of the boat & baggage we paid 25 dollars which is very reasonable.

Friday 8th On puting the things into the boat, I had an opportunity for the first time, of knowing what was in her, & to my astonishment found she had neither Sextant, or any instrument of the kind, neither log nor glass, lead or line, & not even a grapnel; this induced me to take an inventory of what was in her as I had found out what was not; viz Sails & Oars compleat, 1 Mariners compass, 3 Ships muskets, 4 pistols & no cutlasses, although we had six rowers and a Coxswain besides ourselves, an Officer & Pilot, twelve persons when all onboard, 1 horn of powder two or three doz'n of Cartridges, now wet with the rain,

⁹¹ Cathcart's long residence in the Mediterranean area had made him familiar with the Italian and Turkish languages.

⁹² See footnote 70, above.

⁹³ William Blake, the original owner of the land and the man for whom the place was named, had apparently sold out to Brown. See footnote 64, above.

1 Breaker of water, 15 gal's 1 Cooks axe 1 hatchet, 1 Iron pot & tea kettle, 1 tin lantern & 1 bucket, 1 Marque without [p. 11] a fly, & a tent for the people, with salt meat, bread, cheese, & whiskey for 7 men for a month, which with an old Map of Lafons,⁹⁴ composed the whole of our equipments; I cannot determine whether we were dispatched in this incompleat manner, through design, ignorance, or neglect, or all three combined, but I do not hesitate to say, that we are considered as intruders, & that very little facility has been afforded us;⁹⁵ it is due to Com'e Patterson to acknowledge that he gave general orders to the officer to provide everything necessary but he neglected to provide the most necessary articles, which occasion'd us a great deal of trouble & anxiety—

At 9 AM we steer'd down the Plaquemine, the first reach running WNW, & the 2nd SE to Ricars⁹⁶ 6 miles from Blakes, the cur't in our favour, one mile above which, we stop't at an Indian village of the Plaquemine tribe,⁹⁷ & took in Charles an orderly Indian to pilot us to the Town of Franklin upon Teche, for which we agreed to pay him nine dollars—Ricars is the last habitation on this rout, between it & the Teche; at sunset we encamp'd on the banks of the river, not having row'd above 21 miles, in consequence of the delay occasion'd by procuring a pilot, & grounding several times on Cypress stumps & knees in the passage—

Saturday 9th Embark'd at Sunrise, & at 9 AM enter'd Bayou Indigo, the mouth of which is about 30 miles⁹⁸ from Blakes, by the meanders of the Bayou, having been between 10 & 11 hours rowing it, which I compute at 3 miles an hour, having neither log to ascertain the distance nor lead to try the soundings; Bayou Indigo is very narrow & enters NE, & then runs NNW for about 6 miles & empties in Lake Natchez where we enter'd at 11 AM, and grounded so often that we made but little progress, the people having to haul the boat through the mud for two or three hours, here keel boats which draw less water than ours, are frequently detain'd aground for 8 or 10 days, or as long as

⁹⁴ Bartholomew Lafon, a famous surveyor and cartographer resident in Louisiana during the Spanish regime, was the author of an excellent Map of Louisiana.

⁹⁵ One of the numerous complaints recorded by Cathcart in regard to the refusal of the inhabitants of Louisiana to assist him and his party, and the suspicion with which all agents of the United States were regarded in those days. Further on in the Journal he assigns some of the probable reasons for this attitude of the natives.

⁹⁶ One of the very few settlers on Bayou Plaquemine at that date.

⁹⁷ Chetimachas tribe.

⁹⁸ Close to actual distance as scaled on modern maps. Darby's 1816 map shows a raft in Lower Grand River, necessitating a by-pass through Lake Natchez.

a Northerly wind prevails—⁹⁹ Little lake Natchez is only a contraction of the same lake where we encamp'd at sunset, on a small Island, which we call'd Charles Island¹⁰⁰ in compliment to our Indian pilot which pleas'd him very much, & insured his complacency all the rest of the passage at a very small price—

Sunday 10th Embark'd at daylight & proceeded down a branch¹⁰¹ of the Atchafalia in nearly a South direction, following its meanders to Lake Platt,¹⁰² or grassy lake, which is a shallow part between the Chetimaches & Musquito Islands,¹⁰³ having Lakes Palourde to the East, & Chetimaches or grand Lake¹⁰⁴ to the West of it, they in reallity compose but one sheet of water divided by those Islands, but it is highly probable, that grassy lake at no very [p. 12] distant period, had been a swamp, with Bayous through it, for in the present day, during the dry season, there is very little water in it, the grass appearing above its surface (from whence it takes its name) except in some small channels not sufficiently expored. At sunset we encamp'd, having row'd about 12 hours, which I calculate 32 miles; for further particulars I refer to the description of the Navy Commissioners, Chetimaches, & Musquito Islands—

Monday 11th We embark'd at Sunrise, & at 11 AM enter'd one mile west of Grassy lake adjoining Lake Palourde and Lake Chetimaches it lying between them & made sail for the first time, steer'd SSW per Compass leaving three Islands bearing East southerly of us (since calld the Musquito Islands) & went round a small Island, which we since have found to be three Islands (now calld the Navy Commissions)¹⁰⁵ which is situated near the end of Reeds Island, & bears NNW from it, distant about half a mile (see the description of these Islands) & having fell to leeward had to haul up for Reeds Bayou, which runs from Lake Chetimaches where we now are, to the Teche; the Course across is SSW 5 or 6 miles; At Meridian we entered Bayou Reed¹⁰⁶ on an E by S course, which runs in different directions for 3½ miles when it joins the Teche; We steer'd up NW westerly, and

⁹⁹ A South wind is against the current, hence making deeper water.

¹⁰⁰ Impossible to recognize, due to radical drainage changes since 1819.

¹⁰¹ Big Goddel Bayou, Belle River, Bayou Long.

¹⁰² Now Flat Lake.

¹⁰³ Now differently named.

¹⁰⁴ Grand Lake.

¹⁰⁵ Identified with modern Little, Middle, and Morgan islands. Named for John Rodgers, Stephen Decatur, and David Porter, then members of the Board of Navy Commissioners in Washington. See footnote 5, above.

¹⁰⁶ Now called Lower Atchafalaya.

passed two poor plantations on the left hand, or South side, which are the first habitations between this & Ricars on the Plaque-mine—We landed at Labeaux,¹⁰⁷ which is the third plantation, and is 16 miles from Franklin; here we got water, as the Lakes & even the Teche this far up is brackish, & not potable, in consequence of the lowness of the waters in the Mississippi; At 4 PM we encamp'd at Dr Towles plantation,¹⁰⁸ 100 yds from his house, but he did not ask us into it; This gentleman is married to a Miss Conrad,¹⁰⁹ his plantation produces 100 Hhds of sugar,¹¹⁰ besides cotton annually; having dined on this —— Plantation, on the remnants of our provision, which had been thrown into a bag promiscuously, & resembled a beggars wallet, & having staid a sufficient time to refresh the people, we took leave of this hospitable Atakapan Asculapius, his dogs I mean, who were barking at us, & proceeded towards Franklin, distant only ten miles, but we did not arrive there, until daylight the next morning, being obliged to row all the way, the wind & cur't being against us.

¹⁰⁷ Near modern Luckland plantation. The initial letter of this word in the manuscript appears to be "I" or "J" (Cathcart's capital I's and J's look exactly alike), but he was apparently trying to spell phonetically the name "LeBeau". On November 14, 1771, Dr. Francois LeBeau, a licensed physician, received from the Spanish government a grant of land on Bayou Teche, measuring forty arpents front by forty arpents depth on each side of the bayou, making a total of 3,200 superficial arpents. The United States recognized the validity of this grant. On August 1, 1811, Joseph Martin's claim to 960 arpents from it was confirmed; on January 18, 1812, Joseph Babin's claim to 480 arpents from it was confirmed; and on May 9, 1815, the title to the remaining 1,760 arpents from the original grant was confirmed to the "representatives of Francois LeBeau". The name of the original owner of the tract probably was still applied by the local inhabitants in 1819. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 837, 851, 870.)

¹⁰⁸ Near modern Fairfax plantation. In 1813 John Towles (incorrectly printed as "Fowles" in the published account) owned a plantation and eighty-two slaves on lower Bayou Teche. He was the largest slaveholder in St. Mary Parish at that date, as no other planter owned more than seventy-two (Joseph Sorrel), and there were only six planters in the parish owning as many as fifty slaves in that year. Nothing further is known of this individual, other than that he married a daughter of Frederick Conrad (see succeeding footnote). The only John Towles mentioned in the public land records is the one to whom title was confirmed by the United States to three tracts totaling 2,200 arpents on Bayou Rapides, County of Rapides, June 11, 1811; and whose claims to 970 acres on Bayou Gros Tête, County of Pointe Coupée, and to another of 640 acres in County of Rapides, were rejected in 1812 and 1813, respectively. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 339, 776, 800, 825; *Franklin, Louisiana, Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹⁰⁹ Frederick Conrad removed from near Winchester, Virginia, to the Mississippi Territory in 1809, and a few years later he settled on Bayou Teche, where he became a prominent planter. He was the father of Charles Magill Conrad, a prominent Louisiana lawyer and politician who served in the Legislature, in both houses of Congress, and as Secretary of War in Fillmore's cabinet; also of Frederick D. Conrad, another prominent Louisiana lawyer and politician who married into the Hickey family of East Baton Rouge. Besides the daughters who married "Mr. Weeks" and "Dr. Towles" (see footnotes 377 and 379, below), another daughter married Lyman Harding, a prominent planter of Bayou Teche, and still another married one of the Palfreys of the same locality.

¹¹⁰ Sugar cane was a relative new crop on lower Bayou Teche at this date, cotton being the chief staple crop on most of the plantations until some years later, although sugar was produced there on a small scale as early as 1806 and eight planters were producing sugar in 1816. (*American State Papers, Commerce and Navigation*, I, 841; *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39.)

Tuesday 12th Arrived at Franklin & put up at Reeds Tavern,¹¹¹ the site of Franklin extends five Arpents¹¹² on the Bayou or River Teche, is situated on Carlines¹¹³ settlement in the Parish of St Mary Atakapas,¹¹⁴ contains 15 or 20 houses & 120 to 150 inhabitants, & about as many plantations as houses, taking a circle of ten miles round & making Franklin the centre, many of which are very productive, & their owners rich, among whom the [p. 13] Carlines, Sterlings¹¹⁵ & Major Baker,¹¹⁶ are the most opulent, there is supposed to be in all Atakapas between 8 & 10 Negroes for every white resident,¹¹⁷ which in my opinion puts their lives in jeopardy & induces the legislature of the State, to enact the most severe laws, & they justify the most cruel treatment of those poor creatures, as the means of self preservation, by keeping them in the most abject state of subjection, & many have been unmercifully whip'd, & some shot for merely holding

¹¹¹ Probably operated by Isaac Reed, who resided on Bayou Teche in 1813, at which date he was the only taxpayer named Reed in St. Mary Parish. In 1821 he was granted the exclusive privilege of maintaining a ferry, operated by horses, from Franklin, on Lake Verret and all adjacent bayous. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1820-21, pp. 12-14.)

¹¹² Old French unit of land measure, still employed in Louisiana, for both linear and superficial measure. In surveying practice it is now standardized at 192 English feet, or a square of that dimension.

¹¹³ Joseph Carlin (or Carline; the name is spelled both ways in the published records) appears to have been the first settler by that name on Bayou Teche. He received a grant of land from the Spanish government in 1784, which he occupied continuously until his death, his heirs claiming title to the land on the basis of the old Spanish grant. His descendants were prominent in that same area for a long time. In 1813 there were six Carlins owning land and slaves on Bayou Teche: Alexis, with twelve slaves; Danis (Dennis), with ten; Honore, with twenty-five; Celestin, with eleven; Eugene, with seven; and "Mrs. Carlin" (probably the widow of Joseph), with two. And Evan Bowles, who appears to have married a Carlin, owned thirteen slaves. The town of Franklin, located on the old Carlin Settlement, was not incorporated until March 11, 1820. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 840, 852, 869; III, 124, 152, 156, 177, 184; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1820, p. 56; 1824-25, pp. 18-20.)

¹¹⁴ Attakapas was one of the twelve counties into which the Territory of Orleans was originally divided for the purpose of local administration, but in 1811 that county was divided into the two parishes of St. Martin and St. Mary. (*Acts of the Territory of Orleans*, 1811, pp. 104-106.)

¹¹⁵ Alexander Sterling had established a plantation near Franklin before 1813, but had died prior to that date, for the plantation and sixty-seven slaves are listed as belonging to the "Heirs of Sterling". Another plantation and fifty-eight slaves are listed as belonging to Henry and Lewis Sterling in that same year. The two plantations, with their 125 slaves, made the Sterling family the largest slaveholders in St. Mary Parish at that date. (*Laws of Louisiana*, 1820, p. 56; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹¹⁶ Joshua Baker was a prominent resident of Kentucky in the 1790's, where he served as a member of the constitutional convention of 1799 from Mason County. In 1803 he moved to the Mississippi Territory and settled on a cotton plantation near Woodville, Wilkinson County. He took an active interest in public affairs, being a member of the Legislative Council from 1805 to 1808 and president of that body in 1807-1808. Because of the low price of cotton, he removed to the Attakapas district in 1811 and established himself on Bayou Teche, with the intention of trying sugar culture. In 1813 he had thirty-two slaves on his plantation. One of his sons also named Joshua, was appointed Governor of Louisiana, serving from January to July, 1868. (Collins and Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 356; Clarence E. Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States*, V [Territory of Mississippi], 284, 388, 428, 505, 508, 550, 577, 590, 615, 640, 644, 649, 663, 666; Fortier, *Louisiana* [Cyclopedic], I, 57, 464; Eugene C. Barker, ed., *Austin Papers*, I, 184-185; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹¹⁷ This is certainly an exaggeration. In the parish of St. Mary there were 250 taxpayers in 1813, of whom only 147 owned any slaves. The total number of slaves in the parish in that year was 1443, which would make an average of less than ten for each slaveholder. Even admitting that the number of slaves had very largely increased by 1819—the date of Cathcart's visit—his statement is still greatly exaggerated. While no figures are available for St. Martin Parish, the other half of Attakapas, the ratio of slaves to free whites in that parish must have been no greater than for St. Mary. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

up their hand to fend off the blows of their merciless taskmasters; Mr Hutton was witness to an act at New Orleans, which ought to make humanity shudder with horror & execrate the wretch capable of such unprovoked cruelty; A french Creole walking along the boarded pathway made across some of the filthy streets, met a poor lame Negro, who could not get out of the way as fast as he wish'd, & in his hurry knock'd against him, when the villain, for such he must be, deliberately took a pistol from his pocket & shot him in the face, which carried away nearly half of one of his cheeks, & then went on as if nothing had happen'd, nor did the civil authority interfere in the least;¹¹⁸ this treatment may keep the slaves in subjection for a few years, until their numbers increase, but will ultimately tend to insurrection, & a repetition of the scenes of horror committed with success by the Negroes of St Domingo—¹¹⁹

What is surprising, negroes are worth here from 1000 to 1500 dol's each, yet they don't scruple to take their lives for trifling offences, any person who is wicked enough, may shoot a runaway slave, & the state allows the owner thereof 300 dol's indemnification,¹²⁰ two were shot in the vicinity of Franklin while I was there—This day I deliver'd to Mr Hutton his commission from the Navy Dept't & being very much indisposed with a Diarhoea, which has continued ever since the day after I left New Orleans, occasion'd by drinking the waters of the Mississippi, which generally has that effect upon strangers,¹²¹ I went to bed, being very weak & much fatigued.

Wednesday 13th Mr Hutton went in quest of a Pilot, having discharged Charles, & on consultation we agreed to pursue the following rout; not an inconsiderable one, if practicable, in an open six oar'd boat with 12 men onboard & deep loaded with water, provisions & baggage.

¹¹⁸ Another evidence of Cathcart's antislavery views. He seemed ready to believe anything he heard in regard to harsh treatment of the slaves. Other visitors to Louisiana, who published accounts of their experiences, relate similar stories of cruelty to slaves.

¹¹⁹ Reference is to the Negro insurrection in the French colony of Santo Domingo on the West Indian island of Hayti, following the liberation of the slaves as an aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789. In this insurrection many of the former white masters were killed; others were driven from the island, many of whom came to Louisiana as refugees.

¹²⁰ Cathcart was probably familiar with the act of the Louisiana Legislature, which provided an indemnity of \$300 to the owner of each slave killed while a runaway.

¹²¹ At that date the water used for drinking purposes in New Orleans was taken from the Mississippi, but was either filtered through a porous stone or clarified and purified by alum before drinking. Unless thus treated, the water from the river was considered unfit for drinking. (*DeBow's Review*, VII, 419.)

- First:** To explore Lake Chetimaches, Grand Lake or Lake Salé¹²²
- Second:** To explore Berwicks Bay & Bayou Boeuf¹²³
- Third:** To explore Black Bayou;¹²⁴ Deer & Plum Islands—¹²⁵
- Fourth:** To explore Petit Caillou;¹²⁶ and either come out to the west'd of Timballier bay, from Petit Caillou, or into Atchafalaya bay as circumstances may dictate, according to the depth of water in the different Bayous—
- Fifth:** To Explore Belle Isle,¹²⁷ & pass out between Point au Fer, & Point [p. 14] Chevreuil, or through Morrisons Cut, & coast Vermillion bay as far as Chenier au Tigre, & from thence in the Gulf of Mexico, to the entrance of the Mermentau river, up the said as far as live oak grows, & from thence to New Orleans by the best rout, which will be as much as we can possibly effect this season—

This day I went to see a Mr. Brennon¹²⁸ break a wild Prairie horse, in a few hours, by pretended exorcisms, but more by exercise & the application of something which is supposed to effect the olfactory nerve, to so great a degree, that the horse lays senseless for sometime, & becomes perfectly tame, & docil; this secret he sells at different prices, & in the first instance as high as 100 dol's at present for much less, as he has few customers, to break each horse he charges from five to ten dollars; he is a native of Massachusetts (he says) what will not a Yankee find out, to enrich himself, their industry & enterprise (I wish I could leave out & knavery) is unparalleled—

Thursday 14th The Pilot which we had partially engaged disappointed us, Mr Hutton was employ'd all day in search of a Sextant, or Octant, Log, glass,¹²⁹ lead & line, grapnel & several other necessary articles, of which we are destitute, but without success; I wrote to the Navy Board giving an account of the rout we proposed to take &c A No 10—¹³⁰

¹²² Now Grand Lake. *

¹²³ Still called by these names.

¹²⁴ Still so called.

¹²⁵ These islands form the eastern bank of the Atchafalaya where it discharges into Atchafalaya Bay.

¹²⁶ Still so called.

¹²⁷ Still so called. All other features mentioned in this paragraph still bear the names given by Cathcart.

¹²⁸ No further information is available on this enterprising Yankee.

¹²⁹ An instrument to measure time, a devise employed in connection with the log for estimating a ship's progress.

¹³⁰ Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

Friday 15th Mr. Hutton after riding several miles, procured a tolerable good Octant, & got a piece of lead, of which we made a very good hand lead, & marked a line of 8 fathoms; a Mr Boles¹³¹ engaged to Pilot us part of the distance, but afterwards retracted, recommending his Nephew Carline,¹³² whom he said was well acquainted with the Grand lake, & the coast, we engaged him, which with procuring water & provisions, for the voyage, & other necessary arrangements, occupied the whole day; but we did not procure either log, glass, or grapnel, which were much wanted—

There has not been any rain since we arrived here, nor a considerable time before; The Thermometer at Sunrise in the shade was at 56° & at Meridian 67°, the heat no doubt is increas'd by the burning of the Prairies,¹³³ close to the town, the exhalation is so great, that the dew falls from the trees like rain (every morning) & supplies its place, & the town is cover'd with a dense fog, until dissipated by the sun when it is two hours high—

Note

The Courses & distances, so far as is useful, will be corrected by observations made at different periods without regard to time, to prevent unnecessary repetition, & will be mark'd on the Chart, as well as the depth of water, the courses at the entrance, & confluence of the Bayou will likewise be laid down, but I consider it puerile, & of no use, to note all the different meanders of the Bayous, many of which are not ten yards long—

[p. 15]

First Inspection & Survey, from Franklin upon Teche, towards Lake Chetimaches, or Grand Lake, likewise call'd Lake Salé, through Bayou Reed, which runs from the former, to the latter, at the distance of seventeen & a half miles

¹³¹ Evan Bowles (or Boles; the name is spelled both ways in the published records) was an authorized deputy surveyor in the County of Attakapas in 1807 and 1808. In 1813 he owned a plantation on Bayou Teche, with thirteen slaves. His plantation was located in the Carlin Settlement, and it appears that he had married into that family. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 205, 213, 218; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹³² One of the numerous descendants of Joseph Carlin (see footnote 113, above). It appears that Evan Bowles had married into the Carlin clan.

¹³³ Probably intentional, and still in vogue in removing trash which might impede the plowing or cultivation of the land.

from Franklin¹³⁴

Saturday 16th January 1819 At 10 AM, We took our departure from Franklin & steerd down Viz

	miles
SE to Carlines where we took in our Pilot.....	1—
SE to SSE to Pacquas ¹³⁵ Plantation.....	2—
East to " to Fosters ¹³⁶	1—
E 1/2 to S " to Waggemans ¹³⁷	1—
do " to Hudsons ¹³⁸	1—
SSE " to Dr Towles ¹³⁹	4—
NE quarter to Major Moors ¹⁴⁰	4—
do do to Labeaux ¹⁴¹	2—
do do to Owner unknown.....	3/4
do to Robenses last plan'on now Brents & Wilcoxen's ¹⁴²	3/4

¹³⁴ This heading covers both margins and center of the page in the original manuscript Journal. Italics are the Editor's, as are also those in all subsequent similar headings in the Journal.

¹³⁵ Probably Cathcart's phonetic attempt to spell the name "Patout". Isadore Patout, a native of France, came to Louisiana during the Spanish period and obtained a grant of land on Bayou Teche, which he developed into an extensive sugar plantation, later called "Enterprise". (Henry E. Chambers, *History of Louisiana*, III, 363.) However, he is not listed as a resident of St. Mary Parish in 1813, though the plantation which he established may still have been called by his name in 1819. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹³⁶ Levi Foster, a native of Mississippi Territory, came to Louisiana as a young man and settled on Bayou Teche. In 1813 he had only three slaves on his plantation, though he probably developed his holdings rapidly after that date. He took an active interest in public affairs, serving several terms as a representative in the Legislature from St. Mary in the 1820's. His grandson, Murphy James Foster, was Governor of Louisiana, 1892-1900, and later a United States Senator. The family is still prominent in St. Mary. (Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, III, 611; *Louisiana House Journal*, 1823, 1827-1830, *passim*; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹³⁷ Thomas Wagaman owned a plantation with nine slaves on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish in 1813. It is not known whether he was related to George A. Wagaman, a native of Maryland, who is said to have settled in Louisiana about 1815, where he was a prominent lawyer, judge, secretary of State, and a United States Senator, as well as an important sugar planter. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 1835.)

¹³⁸ Francis Hudson owned a plantation with ten slaves on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish in 1813. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹³⁹ John Towles. See footnote 108, above.

¹⁴⁰ It is impossible positively to identify this individual, as there were several Moores who settled in the Atakapas region during the early American period. The records mention William Moore, who owned land on the lower Atchafalaya, and also Lewis Moore, Sr., and Lewis Moore, Jr. Lewis Moore (perhaps Sr.), a native of Virginia, settled on Berwick Bay, became a wealthy sugar planter, and served for a time as parish judge of St. Mary. John Moore, also a native of Virginia, settled on Bayou Teche, where he developed the sugar plantation called "Shadows". He had only two slaves on his plantation in 1813, though he became the most prominent member of the Moore clan on Bayou Teche, serving as a member of the Louisiana house of representatives, 1825-1834, as a member of Congress, 1840-1843 and 1851-1853, and as a member of the Secession Convention of 1861. The Editor's guess is that Cathcart's reference is to this John Moore. (*Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 1828; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 120, 143, 230; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, II, 490; Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, III, 172; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹⁴¹ See footnote 107, above.

¹⁴² William L. Brent, a native of Maryland, established a law office at St. Martinsville in 1809, and in 1816 he was postmaster at that place. He was a member of Congress from the Third Louisiana district, 1823-1829, after which he resided in Maryland until 1844, when he returned to St. Martinsville and resumed the practice of law. He died there on July 3, 1848, aged about sixty-five years. In 1813 Brent paid taxes on a plantation located on the lower Atchafalaya in St. Mary Parish, but he had no slaves on the plantation in that year. Lloyd Wilcoxon owned a plantation and six slaves on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish in 1813, and he was a prominent resident of that parish for a long period. Since Brent was occupied with his professional work, Wilcoxon probably was resident manager of the plantation which they owned jointly in 1819. (Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX [Territory of Orleans], 901; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 734; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 232; *ibid.*, *Miscellaneous*, II, 385; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1826, p. 98; *Planters' Banner*, July 13, 1848.)

From Franklin to the mouth of B'ou Reed is Miles, 17- $\frac{1}{2}$ where we arrived at 4h.25' PM—From the Belize to Franklin in the rout we have come, there is not 100 Live oak trees, fit for Naval purposes, what few there are grow on private property, & at a considerable distance from each other, consequently not worth the attention of government, indeed they are hardly worth the trouble of cutting, much less the expense of transportation; the plantations are on the South,¹⁴³ or left side going up the Teche, the lands are all alluvion, & on the North side are much lower, & very little cultivated, the timber on the margin of no value except for fire wood, intermix'd with some small scrubby live oak, but equally bad Cypress predominates—The Thermometer at Meridian was 72° in the shade; The entrance of Bayou

Miles
Reed runs East meandering to North.....
$\frac{1}{2}$
Then to a grassy Island where the boat grounded NNW—... 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
not being in the channel, in which there is not less than 12 feet water, when the Mississippi is low as it is at present when the water in all the Lakes & Bayous is brackish and not drinkable, but as it rises the water gradually becomes fresh & as good as its parent stream; then N by E.....
$\frac{1}{4}$
Then by the meanders of the Bayou into the lake N, to W by N
1

From the Teche to the Lake by Bayou Reed¹⁴⁴..... 3 $\frac{1}{4}$

At 5h.20' PM we encamp'd a quarter of a mile within the Bayou having in vain sought a dry spot on the outside, first having burn'd the briars & underwood, no person having encamp'd here, before, nor were we very safe from the Panthers, which abound in its vicinity where our Pilot says he kill'd two not long ago—

[p. 16] *Sunday 17* Embark'd at 6 PM & run out into the lake W by N, until the points of the Bayou bore W $\frac{1}{2}$ N & E $\frac{1}{2}$ S of each other, where we had 12 feet water the points are at 1 mile distant from each other,¹⁴⁵ between which there is not

In Reeds creek there is not less than 9 feet water..... East side the point is full of snags & dead Cypress trees, bleach'd white, the tallest of which resembles a gallows which induced us

¹⁴³ The north side of the bayou was subject to flooding; the south side rarely so.

¹⁴⁴ The distance is the same today.

¹⁴⁵ Same at present.

to make it a beacon,¹⁴⁶ & to call it gallows point on Reeds Island, by which name, be it for ever known; & did it depend upon me, I would soon make it a gallows in reallity, & hang a few of the rascally Negro stealers, & smugglers, who infest this country,¹⁴⁷ the only way to cause the cupidity of those wretches to cease.

Steerd between the NNE & ENE points about 9 miles,¹⁴⁸ until 8h.20' AM looking for an Indians hut, where there was fresh water, which we did not find, our 15 gallon breaker being half out, & the lake being brackish, we bore away West, with a fine breeze at ESE having determined to send some of the people over land to the Teche to procure fresh water, & an other barrel if possible, having faild in geting one at Franklin; run along W by S 1/2 S in from 9 to 5 feet water which deepen'd to 12, 15 & 21

In Lake Chetimaches from Reeds Creek on a NE course for 9 miles you have not less than 9 feet water—From the above point on a W by S course for 10 miles to have not less than 3 feet nor more than 21 feet water to Clam creek

feet in the channel, the NE point of Cypress Island¹⁴⁹ bearing NNW & the SE point NNE 2 miles distant; in 100 yds, on the same course shoald to 12 & to 5 feet, & in 7' deepen'd to 15, & in 3 more shoal'd to 7 feet, being close into the SW shore, & from thence, to

Clam creek,¹⁵⁰ we had from 3 to 4 feet water, but I am induced to believe that we did not keep the channel & that there is much better soundings all through the lake—The SW point of this creek is coverd with Clam shells (hence its name) on which you can step onshore dry, it runs up towards the Teche & loses itself in the marshes about 6 miles below Franklin, where a Canal¹⁵¹ might be cut to much advantage, which would shorten the distance to the Mississippi considerably, it is about 40 yards wide at its mouth & is from 3 to 4 feet deep at its entrance, & runs to within 200 yards of the Teche, on the North side are several branch willow trees, by which it may easily be known—

¹⁴⁶ There is now a beacon at this point.

¹⁴⁷ Prevention of smuggling through the bayous of lower Louisiana has always been a problem for United States officials, from the days of the Laffites and their successors to the prohibition era of the 1920's.

¹⁴⁸ This course is now impossible due to sedimentation along the northern shore of the Lake.

¹⁴⁹ Not the modern Cypress Island in Grand Lake.

¹⁵⁰ Not identifiable with any stream on modern topographic sheet, but near the mouth of Yellow Bayou.

¹⁵¹ There is a modern canal at this point.

Mr Carline our Pilot now declared his ignorance of the coast, this we suspected, as he did not know where Cypress Island lay, although it was in sight, he said his Uncle Boles advised him to go with us, not to give information, but to receive it, we therefore turn'd him onshore; this Mr Boles is the person who contracted to furnish the timber for Mr Livingstons¹⁵² contract, & is a trifling fellow. I am persuaded that he play'd us this trick with a design to lead us astray, supposing that we would be tired in a few days, & give up our search, but his nephew had more penetration, & soon found out, that the men with whom he had to deal, were not to be deceiv'd with impunity, [p. 17] and thought it best to confess his ignorance, & make his retreat, for fear of worse consequences, his Uncle in several instances, as well as many others, endeavor'd to deceive us by giving erroneous & contradictory information¹⁵³—Mess'rs Hutton & Marchand walk'd over land to the Teche about three quarters of a mile, & cross'd over in a canoe, to just below Hudsons,¹⁵⁴ where they fill'd our barrel with water, but could neither procure an other or a Pilot, we therefore determined to return to the Teche, & at 2h.30' PM made sail & steer'd East for Bayou Reed, with a fine breeze at SSE—at 3h.50' PM Gallows point bore ESE, & Cypress Island E by N dist'ce 9 miles, they bear of each other E $\frac{1}{2}$ N, & W $\frac{1}{2}$ S¹⁵⁵, when we first enter'd the Lake we supposed that the Group of six Islands, contiguous to Cypress Island, were combined with it, & made only one, but as they tend to the SE of Cypress Island, it must be understood, that they ranged with Gallows point E $\frac{1}{2}$ N. (vide) Chart & survey of those Islands—

¹⁵² On the eve of his departure from New York in December 1803, Edward Livingston had confessed judgment in favor of the United States in the sum of over \$100,000, which amount he hoped to be able to pay from earnings in Louisiana. His Batture land venture did not prove immediately profitable, and he sought other means of discharging his obligation to the government. On June 14, 1816, he entered into a contract with the Navy Department under which he was to supply the timber for the construction of four naval vessels, two 44's and two 74's at a total price of \$100,003.75, exclusive of freight allowance for delivery of the timber at Washington, Philadelphia, or Boston. The timber was to be delivered within one year, but Livingston was unable to fulfill the terms of the contract. The government was lenient, since the chief reason for entering into said contract was to enable the government to recover the sum specified in the judgment against Livingston. However, after waiting for over two years without any of the timber being delivered by Livingston, the Board of Navy Commissioners finally cancelled his contract. (William B. Hatcher, *Edward Livingston: Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat* [Baton Rouge, 1940], *passim*; *American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 431, 482, 586.)

¹⁵³ Another instance of Cathcart's complaints of the suspicion of the inhabitants as to the object of his visit and of their failure to assist or cooperate with the government agents.

¹⁵⁴ Six miles below Franklin. See Journal under date of Saturday, January 16, 1819, and footnote 138, above.

¹⁵⁵ Apparently Cathcart's distances are too great and his bearings off in this section.

A little after dark we enter'd the Teche & encamp'd at Muggahs or McGows Tavern¹⁵⁶ 1 1/2 miles below Reeds creek; this man has the appearance of an itinerant merchant, ycle'e'p'd a Pedlar & is a Scott—(Mr Landreth¹⁵⁷ was perfectly at home here) Madam, for they are all Madams here, of an old Harridan,¹⁵⁸ they are well match'd & making money fast, in the old scotch way, & no doubt will become rich—Here we purchased Demijohns, & emptied the peoples whiskey into them, which enabled us to double the quantity of our water; We likewise engaged Mr Page Bellew,¹⁵⁹ an old inhabitant, well acquainted with the Bayous & Coasts of this Country, as our Pilot, at the rate of 1 dollar per day & to mess at our table—¹⁶⁰

Monday 18th Embark'd at 7h.30' AM & retraced our steps to the Lake,¹⁶¹ where we enter'd at 9 AM, & steer'd NW 1 mile, when the mouth of the Bayou which divides Island No 1 of the group, from Cypress Island, bore from Bayou Reed NW by N dist'ce 9 or 10 miles, it enters near the NE point of said Island—In the Lake, half a mile from this Bayou between its NE point & the Cypress Bayou is 100 to 120 yards wide Depth of water all the way through from 6 to 7 fathoms, Cur't runing from NW, to SE from 1/2 to 1 mile per hour—At the entrance 9 Fathoms

but it would take up too much time for us to attempt it, at

¹⁵⁶ Near modern Patterson. Cathcart may be correct as to the original spelling of the tavern keeper's name, but "Muggah" is the form in which it appears in the printed State and Federal public records; and Muggah was not illiterate, for on March 25, 1811, he signed himself "John Muggah" in an act of sale passed in East Baton Rouge Parish, whereby he acquired a tract of land which adjoined land already owned by him on Bayou Teche. However, his name does not appear on the list of taxpayers in St. Mary Parish for the year 1813; so he must have taken his residence there after that date. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 188; *East Baton Rouge Parish Court Records*, Book B, p. 18 [Office of Clerk of Court, Baton Rouge]; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹⁵⁷ John Landreth, the surveyor in Cathcart's party, was a native of Scotland, while Cathcart was born in Ireland.

¹⁵⁸ Webster's New International Dictionary defines harridan thus: "A worn-out strumpet; a vixenish woman; a hag"—which are not complimentary terms.

¹⁵⁹ Page Belew [sic] settled on land in the Attakapas region in 1802. There was also a Page Bellew [sic] who signed two memorials of the inhabitants of Feliciana County to Congress in 1812. The name is so unusual that these are probably one and the same person. Many of the inhabitants of Feliciana owned land in the Attakapas region, and several of them removed to the latter place before 1819. However, this name does not appear on the St. Mary Parish list of taxpayers for 1813; hence, if this man resided there in 1813 he must have possessed neither land nor slaves. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 126; Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX, 1009, 1011; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹⁶⁰ This appears to be one instance when Cathcart was not overcharged for services by a resident of Attakapas.

¹⁶¹ The altered nature of the north shore of Grand Lake, and Cathcart's apparently faulty directions, makes it impossible to recognize the Cypress Island group in terms of the modern scene. Darby's map of 1816 is too small scale to be of much help.

present—The appearance of the margin of those Islands here, differ'd very little from the Teche, except that the timber is of a larger groth, but not healthy, except towards the point which looks better, the depth of water through the Bayou is from 6 to 7 fathoms, a tall dead Cypress tree, is on each point, which bounds this division, the[y] bear from each other NNE & SSW, where we found no bottom with nine fathom, the nearest point on the main land bearing NW, [p. 18] 8 miles, and the farthest point in sight NW $\frac{3}{4}$ N 11 or 12 miles distant from Cypress Island—

Cypress Isle SW point— 1st Course round the Island West
Lat'd 29:43 N 200 yds 2nd SSW: 400 yds 3rd
Thermometer 64°: 68° 65° S $\frac{1}{2}$ E: 3 miles, here we had from
Wind NE quarter 5 to 7 feet water to within 100 yards of the shore: 4th N by E
 from the SW point 2 miles & then NW 500 yards, to abreast of the point from which we started markd A which compleats the circumference of Cypress Island—

The reason that the timber looks unhealthy on the margin of these Islands, & all others which we have seen, it because the roots are not sufficiently cover'd with earth, & the contiguity of the water—

At 1 PM Mess'rs Hutton & Landreth went with the Pilot to explore the Island commencing from the SW point, where we had ascertain'd the Latitude, on which we found Mr. Joseph Sainette¹⁶² & his negroes encamp'd cutting Cypress (*Cupressus disticha*)¹⁶³ in an hour & a half they return'd & reported that in the circumference of 8 Acres they had counted 60 fine Live Oak trees (*Quercus sempervirens*)¹⁶⁴ fit for every naval purpose, & the Pilot inform'd us that the whole Island the margin excepted, abounded with the same quality of timber; I did not go myself more than 600 yards in a different direction, & saw many trees of an excellent groth; some of which would make Stems for

¹⁶² Joseph Senet (Senat, Senate, Sennett, Sennet, Sinet, Sinnett; the name is spelled in all of those ways in the published records) appears to have been the son of Jean Baptiste Senet, Jr., whose father, Jean Baptiste Senet, Sr., was one of the earliest settlers on the lower Bayou Teche. In 1813 Joseph Senet owned a plantation and five slaves on lower Bayou Teche. In the same year Joseph and Balthazar Senet owned another plantation without slaves, and Balthazar owned another plantation without slaves on Bayou Salé. Eugene Senet (probably a brother of Joseph) also owned a plantation and eight slaves on Bayou Teche in 1813, and the heirs of Honore Senet owned a plantation without slaves in the same locality. Various members of the Senet family claimed large tracts of land in the Attakapas district, some of which claims were confirmed by the United States government while others were finally rejected after thorough examination of the basis of the claims. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 845, 850, 851, 856; III, 121, 149, 152, 157, 159, 226; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

¹⁶³ Now *Taxodium distichum* (L.) L. C. Rich.

¹⁶⁴ Now *Quercus virginiana* Miller.

Ships of the line, & Frigates, & one in particular, measured 9 feet in diameter at the but, of which I have a small piece of the bark. This Island likewise abounds with Cypress (*Cupressus disticha*) Ash, (*Fraxinus tomentosa*)¹⁶⁵ Gum, (*Nyssa salvatica*)¹⁶⁶ Honey locust (*Gleditchia triacanthos*)¹⁶⁷ Hickory (*Juglans Amara*,¹⁶⁸ *laciniosa*,¹⁶⁹ *Squamosa*)¹⁷⁰ but Live Oak predominates, & runs in ridges¹⁷¹ from NW to SE divided by ravines of no great magnitude, over which a few Planks would form bridges, sufficient to facilitate the transportation of the timber, which may be hauld by oxen from any part of the Island to the landing (where if none better can be found it would be necessary to run out a wharf, for at this season of the year, before the waters rise, there is only from two to three feet water close to the shore, probably on Cypress Bayou the best landing might be made, but to ascertain needs further investigation & more time than we have to spare—

On their return conceiving that the reservation of the timber growing on this, & the neighbouring Islands, would be an acquisition well worthy the attention of government, we wrote the following Placard upon a shingle, & naild it up on a large Hickory tree on the SW side of the Island; which includes the whole of the Group, which are calld by the same name, & supposed by the inhabitants to be all one Island, having never been explored before, in consequence of the great quantity of good Cypress growing on the first, or Cypress Island—

[p. 19]

¹⁶⁵ This name is a non-valid synonym of the red ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* Marshall. The citation of its habitat and associates is too indefinite for positive identification. If the tree was an associate of the cypress-gum swamp, then the reference is either to the pumpkin ash, *Fraxinus profunda* Bush, or to the water ash, *Fraxinus caroliniana* Miller. If this was a tree from the higher ground, it could be the green ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *lanceolata* (Borkh.) Sargent. In general the pumpkin ash and the water ash grow in wetter sites than the green ash.

¹⁶⁶ This should be the tupelo gum, *Nyssa aquatica* L., because the black gum, *Nyssa sylvatica* Marshall, is not present in this area and is seldom found in cypress swamps.

¹⁶⁷ Cathcart has used consistently *Gleditchia* for *Gleditria*.

¹⁶⁸ Now known as *Hicoria cordiformis*, (Wang.) Britton, the bitternut hickory.

¹⁶⁹ Probably an error in identification, as the bigleaf shagbark or shellbark hickory, *Hicoria laciniosa* (Michx. f.) Sargent, is a very rare tree in Louisiana, which is known only from West Feliciana Parish.

¹⁷⁰ This name is a non-valid synonym of *Hicoria ovata* (Miller) Britton, the shagbark hickory. This species does not grow in this area and is not common in northern Louisiana.

¹⁷¹ That is, along the old natural levees.

Placard

All persons are hereby prohibited by the "Act of Congress of the 1st of March 1817," from cutting or removing any timber, after the date of the Survey, made this day the 18th of Jan'y 1819, from this Island of Cypress; under the penalty prescribed by the said Act,

**Placard Put up on
Cypress Isle**

Sign'd	{ James Leander Cathcart James Hutton John Landreth, Sur'or
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Having coasted the Island at 4h.10', we encamp'd on its opposite side, & found the live oak as abundant as where we first landed & of the same sizes; near the margin were trees of 3 feet diameter with several large branches, & higher up, some much larger; we therefore calculate, that the Island contains from 3 to 4 trees per acre, of the 4 first classes, nearly in equal proportion. The underwood consists of Palmetto of lantania (*Chamaerops Louisiana*)¹⁷² vines of different sorts, prickly sumach,¹⁷³ white & black thorn,¹⁷⁴ & blackberry briar,¹⁷⁵ on the banks is seen the *Arundo gigantea*,¹⁷⁶ or large cane, the luxuriancy of whose groth indicates the luxuriancy of the soil, & on the margin in many places, are brakes of small water cane or reeds (*Arundo Aquatica*)¹⁷⁷ which makes a beautiful appearance. It likewise abounds in Deer, Bears, Panthers, Hares, (as Mr Landreth says he saw one) or large Rabbits; likewise with fish on its shore in such abundance, that the noise they made in the night, waken'd us several times, they consist at this season, chiefly of Grand Ecaille,¹⁷⁸ Red, Drum, & very large Cat fish, & some Gars, nevertheless the Pilot who understood the business better than we did could not catch any, for want of a net or proper bait—

At night the Musquitoes were troublesome enough, but not near as much so, as in many other places, & I am of opinion, that

¹⁷² Certain statements in this Report seem to reflect the influence of Darby and do not appear to be personal observations. Darby (1816) was the first to use the name *Chamaerops Louisiana* for the common palmetto which is now called *Sabal Louisiana* (Darby) Bonnard. Cathcart's use of Darby's name clearly indicates his familiarity with Darby's statements.

¹⁷³ This common name is not in current usage. However, Darby's comments on the prickly sumach clearly indicates the plant is what we now call Hercules club, *Aralia spinosa L.*

¹⁷⁴ It is not possible to identify this plant.

¹⁷⁵ It is not possible to identify this plant.

¹⁷⁶ This is the native bamboo or cane which today is placed in the genus *Arundinaria*. Botanists differ as to the correct specific name to apply to it; some use *Arundinaria tecta* (Walt.) Muhl., whereas others use *Arundinaria gigantea* (Walt.) Champ.

¹⁷⁷ Now *Phragmites communis* Trin. This is the reed cane which is so widely known in Lower Louisiana by the name Roseau.

¹⁷⁸ Grand Ecaille, commonly called tarpon.

if settled, it would be as clear of noxious insects, as any part of Atakapa in proportion to its number of inhabitants; water is likewise procured by digging pits, but it is not good; no doubt by sinking wells of a proper depth, & consant use, it would become much better, it would however only be of use in the dry season, for when the Mississippi raises, the water in the Lakes, & adjacent Bayous are all fresh & potable—I have been more particular in describing this Island, as it will serve for the whole group with few exceptions, but this ought to be prefer'd to any of the others, should the Government think proper to establish a station here for the purpose of molding, & transporting the timber, the soil appears excellent, & with proper culture would produce all the necessaries, & many of the luxuries of life in abundance. Noxious reptiles in this season are in a torpid state, we therefore did not see any, but no doubt they are the same as in other parts of Atacapas.

[p. 20] *Tuesday 19th* At 8 AM, steer'd through Cypress Bayou NW to the Lake, between Cypress Island & Island No 1

Courses	Miles
From point 1 to 2, N by E.....	3/4
" 2 to 3, NNE 1/2 E.....	1 1/2
Up Bayou A 3 to 4, SSE.....	1/4
" " 4 to 5, SE.....	1/4
To Bayou B 5 to 6, E by N.....	1/4
<hr/>	
	Miles 3—

The coast of Isle No 1 opposite to Cypress Island runs NE by N, nearly: from 1st to 2nd point there was some appearance of oak but from 2nd to 3rd point the land was low and cover'd with indifferent Cypress; off 3rd point snags extend 200 yards from the shore, in 5 & 6 feet water, from 3rd to 4th point we had 6

Isle No. 1. feet water & in the channel between the centre of Cypress Isle & No 1 we had 8 fathoms, between

Bayou A. 3rd & 4th point in the mouth of Bayou A in which

Bayou B. is 6 fathoms water; in 450 yards the course alters

to SE opposite to a small group of branch willow, & some ap-

Myrtle Isle. pearance of Oak. from 3rd point on 1st Isle there

is an Island in the lake which bears NNE from it, & is independent of this group, named Myrtle Isle—

At 10 AM, we went onshore on Island No 2 to explore, at 12 yds from the bank we had $5\frac{1}{2}$, & close to it $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms water clay bottom, Cypress of a bad quality seem'd to predominate on Isle No 2 & Bayou A or 1st Bayou from Cypress Isle explored the bank, but contrary to our expectations, we discovered some fine trees, from 3 to 8 feet in diameter, & a thriving growth of young

trees, which having a view to futurity in my opinion are of more importance than the old ones; Red oak (*Quercus rubra*)¹⁷⁹ in small quantities were likewise found, & I pick'd up a locust bean, which indicates that the Locust tree (*Robinia pseud acacia*)¹⁸⁰ grows here likewise—

We cross'd over to Island No 1, here the Bayou is 150 yards wide runs—E by N, close to the bank has $3\frac{1}{2}$, and in the center 8 fathom water, here we landed, but there was no appearance to induce research, we therefore run along for a quarter of a mile, & landed on a spot where we saw some live oak Isle No 1 of 12 inches diameter, & in a short excursion found a few of the 2nd class, I counted 20 from 3 to 7 feet diam'r & Mr Hutton saw one nearly 9, but the greatest proportion are from 3 to 5 feet diam'r only; The chief groth seems to be Red oak, which grows on low ridges, & have a quantity of Misletoe¹⁸¹ growing on them, as on the live oak grew Polypody,¹⁸² there was likewise some Cypress near the margin: In this Bayou we saw a large Alligator, which is the first we have seen since we left the Teche—

At Meridian we were off Bayou B or 2nd Bayou; The general course through Bayou A is from E by S, to E by N, at the Bayou B or 2nd Bayou mouth of Bayou B which runs N by W, Isle No 2 & S by E, to the Lake, & which is my fifth & last point of Island No 2 there, is 7 fathom water & [p. 21] is 100 yards wide, on the East side

¹⁷⁹ Probably what is now called *Quercus rubra* var. *pagodaefolia* (Elliott) Ashe, the cherry bark oak. The southern red oak, *Quercus rubra* L., grows only in the pine lands of Louisiana.

¹⁸⁰ This species is not considered by botanists to be indigenous to Louisiana. Darby reports black locust from the vicinity of Natchitoches and along the Ouachita River, which is probably an error, as black locust does not occur as a native along these streams. It is interesting to note that Engelmann reported black locust as native in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas; likewise there is traditional evidence that the Indians brought this species to the lowlands from the Appalachian Mountains.

¹⁸¹ The mistletoe, *Phoradendron flavescens* (Pursh) Nutt., is a water parasite common on many kinds of trees.

¹⁸² The polypody or resurrection fern, *Polypodium polypodioides* (L.) Watt. This is a common epiphyte on many kinds of trees, especially live oak, and after a drenching rain the expanded fronds are conspicuous.

of which commences No 3, which runs parallel with Island No 1,
Isle No. 3 & bears South of it; From the 1st to the 2nd point,
Bayou C. which terminates Island No 3 in Bayou C or 3rd
 Bayou, the course is due East, distance 2 miles, it
 runs NW & SE and has 7½ fathom water at its mouth, & is
 bounded on the North by Isl'd No 4.

From the 1st to the 2nd point of Island No 4, which runs
 parallel to Island No 1, the course is ESE distance 2 miles; we
 landed at this point, on No 4, which was about half a mile across,
 but we did not find any live oak, it being as well as Island No 3,
 one continued mass of Cypress; At 1h.45' PM, we cross'd over

Island No 4	to Island No 1, & had 7½ fathom water, in
Continuation of	the centre of the Bayou, muddy bottom, at
Isl. No. 1	2h.15' we found live oak, equal to that already
Bayou D	described on this Island, & rather more in
Island No 5	quantity, which induces us to believe that it
Bayou E.	will average 3 good trees per acre, it likewise
Island No 6	produces some good Hackberry (<i>Celtis crassifolia</i>) ¹⁸³ & honey locust, (<i>Glenditchia triacanthos</i>) From point 2, to 3, the course is E by N, dis't 1 mile

where Island No 4 terminates in Bayou D or 4th Bayou which separates it from Island No 5, & runs in two branches, one NE, and the other NW, divided by a small Island of no note; here commences Isl'd No 5 which extends half a mile S by E to Bayou E or 5th Bayou which divides it from Island No 6; in which is from 6½ to 7½ fathom water, & runs into the lake East & West; Island No 6 is the last of the group, is bounded by the Lake & terminates with Island No 1, the points of which bears from each other ESE, and WNW dist'ce ¼ of a mile—Island No 6 extends about a quarter of a mile, the point of which bears from us SSE & the point of Island No 1, West, at nearly a quarter of a mile dist'ce each.

The East point of Island No 1 at the South side of the Island bore with Island No 6, where it enter'd the Lake on the Teche side, W by N, & E by S, distance 10 miles, & ran in a line with the termination of Island No 1—

¹⁸³ This name has been placed in the synonym of *Celtis occidentalis* L., a northern species. *Celtis laevigata* Willd. is the common hackberry in Louisiana. Some writers for pedagogical purposes limit the common name hackberry for the northern species and use sugarberry for the southern species; however, most Louisianians use the name hackberry.

At 3 PM we bore away through Bayou A, NE to ENE—150 yards, to the mouth of Bayou E, which runs in East, & West, & divides Islands No 5 & 6, this Bayou would be No 6 had I not call'd both branches of D or 4th Bayou by the same name—Steer'd through East 100 yds, to the mouth of a small Bayou or gully; then SE by S $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, S $\frac{1}{2}$ E, 150 yds SE $\frac{1}{2}$ S, $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile East 200 yds SE by E 200 yds SE 300 yds ESE 400 yards to the end of the Bayou where it narrow'd to 50 yards wide & Shoald to 4 fathom in the centre—On inspecting Island No 5 we found **Island No 5.** some good live oak trees, but in general of small groth, a few were from 4 to 5 feet diam'r & would probably average, 2 trees per acre.

We landed on Island No 6, & found some good trees from **Island No 6.** 3 to 4 [p. 22] feet diameter, but not so numerous as on No 5, the whole of this group of Islands contain valuable timber, we, therefore, recommend them as worthy of reservation by government, for the use of the Navy of the United States. We encamp'd late this evening on Island No 5, after a very hard, and perplexing days work; The mouth of this Bayou, which is 50 yards wide, & in which are some **Thermometer 65°, 75°, 68°.** dangerous snags, has 4 fathom water in it, & bears from our encampment ESE 100 yards distance, which is already included in our last course—

Wednesday 20th Notwithstanding it was foggy, with rain, which augur'd a bad day, our anxiety to proceed got the better of our fears, especially as the Musquitos which although bad enough in all conscience before, were sufferable, until last night, & this morning, when they attack'd us without mercy; We got underway at 7 AM with a SSW breeze & steer'd out of the Bayou ESE, to the point which runs ENE a considerable way out, & is full of snags—it appears to have been wash'd away from the Island No 5, between which is a channl sufficiently wide, with 5 fathom water in it—The general bearing of the land from Islands No 6 to No 1 is WNW, nearly, & vice versa, We went round this snaggy point & steer'd from N to NW by N having land on the NE side, apparently an Island before mention'd, and enter'd into Bayou F or 6th Bayou, which runs between it & the East end of Island No 5, the point on the East end of the Island bearing from Snag point NW by W $\frac{1}{2}$ W distance 1 mile, sounded

& got no bottom with 8 fathom, from Snag point to the other land is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, proceeded down the Bayou NW $\frac{1}{2}$ N, in which is a tongue of low land on the NE side, $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile long, which contains some scrub oak, & blasted Cypress of no use, at the end of which the Bayou is 80 yards wide, & in which we found no bottom with 8 fathom of line out; continued our course NW by N 1 mile to the Bayou, which separates Isl'ds No 5 from No 4, which runs up SW by W, the distance from Snag point being 2 miles, this compleats the survey of Island No 5. At the mouth of this Bayou the boat ran aground 30 yards from the shore, & at the entrance of Bayou Petite Sorel, which we enter'd at

Bayou F. Myrtle Isle so called in consequence of the predominance of the Myrtle tree (*Myrica indora*) Bayou Petite Sorel. These changes took place in rowing 10 min's

9h.15' AM, we only found $2\frac{1}{2}$ & 3 feet water; Bayou Petite Sorel¹⁸⁴ enters ENE, & empties into Bayou Long, when in 200 yards the water deepen'd to 4 fathoms, at the entrance of another Bayou, which bore SE; $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from which is another Bayou, which runs in

NW by N, Course NE by E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile, to above the mouth of the last Bayou, where we had 11 to 13 feet water, & immedately shoald to 2 feet, & on the SE side deepen'd again to 12 feet, where no doubt is the channel, which to be of any use here, as well as all through the Lake ought to be staked off at low water—

[p. 23] Steer'd ENE 300 yards, to N by E 100 yds, & continued 200 yds to the mouth of Bayou Cheval,¹⁸⁵ so call'd from a dead horse having been found on it some years ago at the mouth of which is 6 feet, it tends NW by N runs several miles & loses itself in the marshes—From Snag point to Bayou Cheval there is not the least appearance of Live oak of any value; here we saw a large Alligator the second since we left the Teche; continued up Bayou Petite Sorel, round a point from N by E to S, $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, to a small Bayou, which enters on the North side, & runs in SSE, here we enter'd 100 yards, & steer'd South 300 yards, & call'd Alligator Creek or Bayou from the great number

Bayou Cheval

Alligator B'ou or Creek

of these amphibious animals which we

found there, it seems to be their head quarters at this season, for we saw at least 100 at once, either basking in the sun on the banks, or

¹⁸⁴ At least in part the same as present Little Bayou Sorrel.

¹⁸⁵ Not recognizable.

forming a line a head across the Bayou; Having given up every idea of finding Live Oak of any value, in consequence of the Predominance of Cypress, & the lowness of the land, we landed on Alligator Island at a point where the B'ou is not more than 40 yards wide, & at 10 AM found that what had the appearance of Oak at a distance was Myrtle (*Myrica inodora*)¹⁸⁶ which grows here in abundance, Embark'd again, & run 150 yds S by E: SE 150; SSE 150, S by E 80: SE 150, SSE 140: where this Island which we have call'd Myrtle Island, was divided from another to the Southward of it; then SSE 300 yards SE by S 450 yards: E by S, 200 & SE by E 450 yards, which brought us to another Bayou, which divides Alligator from Myrtle Isl'd continued in Alligator Bayou & run SSW 80 yards & then SSE 450 yds which brought us into the Lake where we found 8 feet water which shoald in some places to 3 feet: Alligator Island is bounded on the South by Bayous Petite Sorel, & Alligator, on the starboard side of which is an Island of the same extent as Alligator Isle, divided by a small Bayou, off the mouth of which there is from 2½ to 3½ fathom water; Alligator Bayou is from 40 to 60 yards wide & its depth is from 12 to 18 feet, all the way through to the Lake where it is shoaler, having 4 feet water close to its banks—

From Myrtle Isle there runs off a point full of snags & old trees; the entrance of Myrtle & Alligator Bayous bear NE & SW of each other, & Snag point on Myrtle Isle WSW of us, distance 3 miles, & Myrtle Bayou NW ½ a mile: The NW point of the 1st of the three Islands these we afterwards named the Navy

Porters Island¹⁸⁷

Rodgerses Island¹⁸⁸

Commissioners Islands being nearly abreast of Snagpoint, bearing from us SW ½ S, dist'ce 3 miles, & the point which runs out above the 3rd Island, which I suppose to be a point of Reeds Island,¹⁸⁹ bears W by S ½ S 8 or 9 miles—

Postions station¹⁹⁰ to which we steer'd, is on Reeds Island at the distance of 1 mile over land to opposite to Renthrops

¹⁸⁶ *Myrica inodoro* Bartram grows in the longleaf pine lands and at present is known only from Washington Parish in Louisiana. The wax myrtle present here is *Myrica cerifera* L.

¹⁸⁷ Modern Little Island, near the southwestern extremity of Grand (Six Mile) Lake.

¹⁸⁸ Modern Morgan Island.

¹⁸⁹ Modern Berwick Island.

¹⁹⁰ No further information is available on this Indian village or on Postion, the head of it.

ferry¹⁹¹—& bears from Myrtle Bayou S 1/2 E distant 4 miles: The depth [p. 24] of water in this part of the Lake, is generally 5 feet; in the middle between Myrtle Bayou, & the 3 Islands 12 feet, & in approaching nearer to the Islands 4 & 4½ fathoms, which is the channel, & no doubt extends a considerable way up the Lake; there is no doubt in my mind but a vessel drawing 6 or 7 feet water would find sufficient depth of water from the confluence of the Atchafalaya to Cypress Islands, but the fact ought first to be ascertained by actual survey—

Since the morning, we had been threaten'd with a storm, & had several squalls, & smart showers, we arrived at Postions Indian settlement in the afternoon, just time enough to evade its effects; hardly had we pitched our Tents, when the gale commenced at SSW, & the rain fell in torrents & lasted about three hours, when it moderated, & gave us an opportunity to light a fire, to keep the mosquitos at a distance, as well as to prepare something, to satisfy the cravings of nature—

Postions settlement was composed of three huts; his own, Joe Jupiter's,¹⁹² the son of the former chief of the Chetimáchaux, to whose tribe they belonged, & Joe Bios,¹⁹³ who with all his family were absent. On our arrival Postion was asleep, having been intoxicated the day before, & had just return'd from a hunting party, where they got Taffia¹⁹⁴ their favorite beverage; he is a mongrel between an Indian & a white man; their eldest son Pierre was likewise half drunk, & said he intended to have fired upon us, but when he saw that we were arm'd with the cunning of an Indian, he turn'd it off, by saying it was only to shew us where they lived, & to offer us their service; Madam Felicity, Postion's wife, was decently dress'd in a callico gown, & wore her hair put up in imitation of our ladies; she was modest,

¹⁹¹ About a mile above the discharge of the Lower Atchafalaya River into Berwick Bay. In 1813 Peter Henry Rentrone (spelled also "Renthrop" and "Renthrope") owned a plantation and eight slaves on Berwick Bay, and Frederick Rentrone (probably the son mentioned by Cathcart) owned a plantation without slaves on the lower Atchafalaya. In 1811 the Territorial Legislature authorized Henry (certainly "Peter Henry") Rentrone to operate a ferry from the lower part of Bayou Teche, through lakes Plat, Palourde, de Jone and Verret, the tolls being fixed in the act at four dollars for each foot passenger and twelve dollars for each man and horse. This grant of special privilege was limited to seven years; so, in 1817 Frederick Rentrone, then a resident of Assumption Parish, and Henry Knight of St. Mary were granted the same privilege for a further term of seven years. Rentrone's Ferry was long a landmark on the lower Atchafalaya, and the family were prominent in the affairs of that section. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 227, 229; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Acts of Territory of Orleans*, 1811, pp. 10-16; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1816-17, pp. 10-12, 96; 1823, p. 90; 1824-25, pp. 18-20, 42-44, 58-60.)

¹⁹² This may be the man listed as "Jupiter, free negro", who had owned over 700 acres of land on Bayou Teche, title to which was confirmed in Denis Carlin by the United States government. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 869.)

¹⁹³ No further information on this individual is available.

¹⁹⁴ A kind of rum made from fermented cane juice, and a favorite beverage with slaves and the lower order of whites.

& reserved, & never drank any strong liquor, she had been the Belle of her tribe in her youth & was not ugly now for a woman of her age & manners; their hut was clean & spacious, the frame was of Cypress, cover'd in & sided with double rows of Palmetto,¹⁹⁵ which kept it dry, & warm, it contain'd three bed stands, one with Callico curtain, or mosquito bars, some common chairs which they lent us to sit on, a teapot, cups, saucers & some other crockery, & kitchen utensils, & in fact they seemd to live as

**Postions Settlement on Reeds
Isl'd Lake Chetimaches or
Grand Lake**

comfortable as the lower class of whites do in general; at the door of their hut, were Bear, Deer, &

Racoon skins, with Venison &

wild ducks, & their lines were out to take fish, but the men were too drunk to take them in, they were however civil enough, & tolerably well dress'd; in their fields were very good corn, the ears of which were turn'd down to preserve the grain from the birds; & weather, as they as well as the whites in this country, are too lazy to take it in, faster than they want to use it; they had likewise [p. 25] abundance of Pompions,¹⁹⁶ & Hannover turnips. Postion owns hores & cattle, & is rich in the wealth most valuable to Indians; he is the chief of the tribe, speaks barbarous french, & a little english besides his own tongue, & the whole settlement are demi Roman Catholics. We purchased from him a small Batteaux, a duck, some venison, & pompions, on reasonable terms—Their dogs were numerous, & loquacious, had a natural antipathy to white men, but were great cowards, & never made an attack but in squadrons of four or five; they had likewise a very fine large cat, with long hair, quite fat, & sociable, a sure sign that its owners lived well—Madam Juno, Joe Jupiters wife, was likewise a mongrel between an Indian, & a Negress, still retaining the curly wool of an African, but much longer, she was dressed like the other, in a calico gown, but had no shift! & a young woman of the same breed, who I suppose was her sister, wore a blanket only—their hut was smaller, not so clean, & comfortable, nor so well furnish'd as Postions; Mr Jupiter was very much intoxicated, & our Pilot who knew him, says he has the reputation of being a great Scoundrel, however he did not trouble us—As from this settlement we intend to take a fresh departure in the morning; having procured a Batteaux

¹⁹⁵ Such huts are still frequently built by coastal trappers.

¹⁹⁶ French name for pumpkins.

or Canoe; fresh water & provisions, sufficient to last us some time, We here conclude our first inspection & survey, hoping the second may be as successful—

Second Inspection & Survey

Thursday January the 21st 1819 At 8 AM, we got underway with a fine breeze at SE & fair weather, but had not been out long before it came on to blow fresh accompanied with rain in smart showers—From Postions to the NE point of Rodgers¹⁹⁷ or the 1st Navy Commissioners Island, the course is NNW dist'ce half a mile, the NE point of which is distant from the SE point of Reeds Island half a mile, off this Island No 1 there runs out a shoal point for a quarter of a mile, the E't end of which runs North, & South, up the Bay opposite to Postions for one mile; steer'd West on the Northside of No 1, in the channel which

Navy Commissioners Islands.
Rodger's or Island No 1
Depth of water 2½ to 3
feet 9 to 15 feet As we en-
tered 18 f't towards the
point, 9 to 12 f't at the Bank
of No 1, 5½ feet. Current
setting through the channels
NE, 1 mile per hour

runs between it & Decaturs¹⁹⁸ Island No 2, to the East end of No 2, ¼ of a mile; from the centre of No 1 to the East ends of Nos 2 & 3 or Decaturs, & Porters Islands N by E ½ a mile; to the North side of No 3 or Porters Island, which lays nearly opposite to Myrtle Bayou (No 1) runs a mile E't & W't, No 2 on the South

side of which we run, is ¾ of a mile long¹⁹⁹ Course through West clear to the point—

[p. 26] At 8h.40' AM, we landed on the North side of Island No 1²⁰⁰ & found that in point of number of trees per Acre it was nearly equal to Cypress Isle—(3 or 4 trees per acre) but they were smaller, being generally from 3 to 5 f't diam'r, the groth of other trees & underwood the same as on the other Islands where live oak was found; the soil rich alluvion fit for cultivation

At 9h.20' row'd over the channel which is 100 yards wide, & landed on the South side of Decaturs Island No 2,²⁰¹ where we

¹⁹⁷ Cathcart had previously called Rodgers (Morgan) the 3rd island.

¹⁹⁸ Modern Middle Island.

¹⁹⁹ This is approximately the present size of these islands.

²⁰⁰ Rodgers (modern Morgan) Island.

²⁰¹ Modern Middle Island.

found the Live oak trees to average the same number per acre Decatur's Island—at the bank 3 f't 30 f't centre channel 4 to 6 Fathoms as No 1 & something larger, some trees being 7 feet diam'r but not looking quite so healthy as the smaller trees; the general aspect the same, as on No.1; the last reach through runs WSW, for 100 yards—

The range of the NW extremity of the three Navy Commissioners Islands is from No 1 to 3 NE by N, 2 miles, & vice versa runing along the NW end of No 2, Course NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile,

At the points 100 yds from No 2 3 feet water only 8 to 14 feet Porters Isl'd Twenty five feet from the bank of No 3, 7 fath'ms on the South side On the E point 2 f't only Chan'l 6 to 8 fathoms When clear of the point 3 Fath'ms

through between Nos 2 & 3 East, the channel is 100 yards wide, & the Islands run parallel to each other, East, & West $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, on the west point of which were a large flock of Pelicans & many gulls, the first we have seen in the Lake; Landed on No 3 or Porters Island,²⁰² & for its magnitude, found more Live Oak on it, than

on any Island we have seen, it being the chief groth; the dimensions from 3 to 6 feet in diameter, but the branches small in proportion, the general aspect of the Island the same as the others, in the channel which runs East & West the depth of water is from 6 to 8 fathoms—

The East points of Nos 2 & 3 bear from each other NE by N, and (vice versa) The East end of Porters Island is about 200 yards wide,²⁰³ when clear of which, in the Lake, you have 3 fathoms water; the North side tends W by S, & E by N, & here ends the Inspection & Survey of the Navy Commissioners Islands; steer'd out East into the Lake where we had 7 feet water—

At Meridian the Centre of the East point of Porters Island No 3 bore from us W by S $\frac{1}{2}$ S distance 3 miles—

Islands Nos 1 & 2 are supposed to average 3 good trees per acre the chief groth being Live Oak.
Thermometer 60: 71: 63:

Lat'd Obs'd 29°: 27' N

Note

²⁰² Modern Little Island.

²⁰³ Now Little Island, somewhat smaller today.

Third Inspection & Survey

Thursday January 21st—1819—Just after Meridian, we enter'd into the Bayou, which runs between the two northern Chetimaches Isles,²⁰⁴ which divides Lake Chetimaches, from Lake Platt, or grassy lake, steer'd to its mouth NE, & then E by N, to E by S; 3 or 400 yards, in some places we had 3 fathoms, & in others, only 4 feet water; At 12h.30' PM We enter'd Lake Platt, the northern or smallest pass through the Musquito Isles

Towards Plum & Deer Islands by Berwick Bay

to go into Lake Palourde, bearing SE by E, & the southern or largest [p. 27] pass SE, being separated by an Island half a mile wide; in Lake Platt, there is only from 18 inches, to 4 feet water at present, with the current seting from it West, into Lake Chetimaches, at the rate of two miles per hour, & is govern'd by the ebb & flood, which runs 12 hours

Lake Platt depth 1½ to 4 ft but raises with a Southerly wind & flood, 9 to 18 inches cur't sets W 2 miles per hour

each way; the wind being SE & indicating a storm, we return'd— & at 1h.30' PM encamp'd on the northernmost of the Chetimaches, when the rain pour'd down in torrents, accompanied by very

heavy thunder & lightening; at 3 PM it clear'd up partially, & we proceeded ESE, to SE by E, to the Musquito pass above mention'd, distant about 4 miles, the pass²⁰⁵ into the Atchafalaia bearing SSW, when we were two thirds over towards the pass, we had only 4 feet water; We enter'd 7 Oak Bayou²⁰⁶ which runs

4 feet Seven Oak Bayou 3 or 4 Fathom on the margin 9 feet in some places—

between the Musquito Isles, from Lake Platt to Lake Palourde which is about 300 yards long, & 60 wide, course through ESE, where we had

from 3 to 4 fathom water, with a muddy bottom so soft, that near the shore, you may run an Oar its whole length into it, which makes it difficult to land; in the middle of this Bayou is a small Island, which from Lake Platt appears like a sail, on which grow seven live oak trees, hence derives its name; We run into Lake Palourde in chase of a solitary old man in a canoe, whose name is Dunlevy,²⁰⁷ in hopes to purchase some fish from him, but he had

²⁰⁴ Now consist of two islands lying directly north of Berwick Bay, the southern one called simply "Island"; the other, "Dog Island".

²⁰⁵ Modern Drew's Pass.

²⁰⁶ This group now consists of four islands, only one of which (Middle Island) is named on the topographic sheet. The passes are named, but none is called Oak Bayou.

²⁰⁷ Talmadge Dunlevy, as early as 1801, lived on land claimed by him near the mouth of Bayou Teche, a few leagues above Berwick Bay. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 844, 856; III, 148.)

not caught any, he lives here in a hut all alone, & seldom visits the haunts of man, & may with propriety be calld the Lord of the Lake; it being late we return'd, and at 5 PM encamp'd on the North side of the southermost Island—Lake Chetimaches, with Lakes Platt & Palourde at its East end, & lake Chicó (at Bayou grand Sorel,)²⁰⁸ are all one sheet of water, divided by innumerable Islands & marshes, with Bayous runing through them, in different directions, from the Teche to the Mississippi; the Islands where we are encamp'd, divides Lake Platt, from Lake Palourde, which we have calld the Musquito Islands, to commemorate our sufferings last night; at this moment we are spoted like Leopards, & bleeding at every pore, notwithstanding we used every precaution in our power to evade the depredations of those noxious insects—

Friday 22nd Having experience'd very bad weather last night with rain & thunder & lightening, we did not embark until 8 AM, when we steer'd through 7 Oak Bayou into Lake Palourde. The SW point of Musquito Island bears from the 2nd Island NE; & SW. Steer'd round Musquito Island S to SW, 250 yards, & then through to grassy Lake NW by W $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile; on the SW side of Musquito Island, where we landed to explore; with the boats bow on shore, at her [p. 28] stern, we had 10 feet water; here we found some scrubby live oak on the margin of no value, the land being too low to produce it good, & Myrtle, and Cypress predominating; the southern pass, which we now call Bayou Pelican,²⁰⁹ in consequence of the great number of Pelicans seen on its shores, in which there is an Island, which makes the appearance of a third pass, & is so

**B'ou Pelican 4 to 5½ fathom
in the chan'l cur't sets WNW
& ESE Lake Platt 18 inches
water**

call'd, but only small boats or canoes can go through it, we attempted, but return'd without effecting a passage; off the point of the last Island, (4 feet water,) &

in Grassy lake from 1½ to 3½ feet on a North course for 1½ miles—From the mouth of B'ou Pelican in Lake Platt, to Bayou Long, the course is North 3 miles;²¹⁰ the land tending from 7 Oak Bayou, to Bayou Long NNW; There is a remarkable opening in the marsh bearing NE by N, which looks like a Bayou, but is not, it is about half way between Pelican & B'ou long; here the boat ran aground ¼ of a mile from the shore not having more than 1½

²⁰⁸ Bayou Sorrel; Lake Chicot is now quite distinct from Grand Lake.

²⁰⁹ Probably the modern Croesus Pass.

²¹⁰ The north shore has built out at least a mile since 1819.

feet water, bottom full of clam shells. At 10 AM we return'd, there not being water enough in the Lake to float the boat to Bayou long, & steer'd SE by E 1/2 E, for 7 Oak pass, to Lake Palourde—From 7 Oak pass to the S'ward the land tends SW, to the Chetimaches Isles, which divides the lake of that name from Lake Platt or grassy lake—

At 10h.45' AM, the land which divides the Atchafalaia from Lake Palourde²¹¹ bore from 7 Oak pass, SE 3/4 of a mile, the main land East 6 miles, Bayou Mellam²¹² NE by E 3 or 4 miles—the land to the S'ward tending SW for about 2 miles—

The entrance into LaCoup which leads from this lake to Bayou Boeuf bear SE by E dist'ce 5 or 6 miles, when Bayou Mellam bears NE by E dist'ce 2 miles:²¹³ At 12h.30' PM we bore away for Bayou Mellam NW by N, Dunlevy's hut, bearing ENE 1 mile dist. Bayou Mellam runs in various meanders about 4 miles from Lake Palourde, to where it enters Bayou Longue,²¹⁴ 4 miles from the junction of said Bayou with Lake Platt, & 12 miles from

**Lake Palourde approaching
B'ou Mellam we ran aground
several times & coming near
the mouth had only 4 feet
water—**

Lake Verrett,²¹⁵ Bayou Longue forming a channel between the two Lakes: From the mouth of Bayou Mellam, a Bayou²¹⁶ connecting Lakes Palourde & Verret bears E by N 2 miles distant—

Bayou Mellam enters N by W, the points at the entrance bearing NE by E, & SW by W of each other, which is likewise the bearing along, or tending of the Coast—At 1 PM, went on shore to dine, at a handsome shell bank²¹⁷ on the larboard entrance, the

**Off the mouth 8 to 13 feet
In the mouth 3 Fathom
Boats bow on shore 5 ft.
water Shamrock Isle**

opposite shore shewing nothing but a few bad Cypress trees in the water, at some distance, there appear'd a few scrubby oaks of no value, cover'd with moss—

²¹¹ Still called Lake Palourde. The "land" mentioned is the modern Tiger Island on which Morgan City is situated.

²¹² Bayou Milhomme; another example of Cathcart's phonetic spelling.

²¹³ The extreme southeast corner of Lake Palourde.

²¹⁴ Bayou Long.

²¹⁵ Cathcart's distances check closely with present ones, showing that alluviation has not been so extensive here as in the Cypress Island section.

²¹⁶ Modern Persimmon and Simon passes. *

²¹⁷ An Indian midden; which indicates shore line stability. Cathcart calls the shell bank here "Shamrock Isle".

This bank had been a station for burning shells to make lime,²¹⁸ the remains of which were visable, as well as an abandon'd fish pen—

Having dined, we steer'd up the Bayou N by W; 200 yards, W 200, [p. 29] SW, 100, W, 100, NW by N, 150 yards, here the Bayou was from 60 to 80 yards wide, & the depth, was from 6 feet, to 5½ Fathom in the channel; We landed on the South side, & found between 30 & 40 good trees of the 2nd 3rd & 4th classes, they run in a ridge parallel to the margin, & about 150 yards deep; Embark'd & steer'd N by W, to NW, 200 yards, WSW to NW, 250 yds W by N 150 yds and NW: 1 mile, when being near to Bayou

Bayou Mellam Longue, & not finding Oak or any appearance
Shamrock Isle to justify our proceeding any farther in quest of it, at a quarter past 3 we return'd by the same rout, and encamp'd on the bank where we dined at 4h.20' PM. The wind being Southerly we had some heavy rain, & in this Bayou at one *coup d'oeil*,²¹⁹ we saw more than 100 Alligators, some of whom were from 12 to 14 feet long—

The general aspect is nearly the same, as the other Bayous, with the addition of shell banks, thrown up by the current,²²⁰ which runs in here from the Lake NNW½ a mile per hour, & is govern'd by the tide, the soil is alluvion, subject to inundation from the overflow of the Mississippi, as are all the Islands in this vicinity, its production Red Oak, & Cypress, rank yellow grass, & Palmetto—

The echo in these solitudes passes all comprehension, & can only be exceeded in mountainous wilds of equal extent; behind the banks of every description, the land is much lower, & sometimes is only a marsh subject to frequent inundation—

Saturday 23rd The Island on which we encamp'd last night, now call'd Shamrock Isle,²²¹ from having found a quantity of that plant growing on it; & likewise a beautiful variegated flower resembling sweet william but without scent; is the eastermost of the Musquito Isles—

The next Island which forms the other side of Bayou Mellam We have named Lafourche Island,²²² as it is bounded by Lafourche

²¹⁸ Shells from the coast were the only source available to the early settlers of that region for making lime.

²¹⁹ French term: English equivalent of *glance*.

²²⁰ The current probably had little to do with it.

²²¹ Name given by Cathcart to the shell bank lying between Bayou Long and Bayou Milhomme.

²²² For obvious reasons the concept and name have long since disappeared.

on the East; part of Lake Verrett & Bayou longue on the North; Bayou Mellam, part of Lake Palourde, La Coup, & part of Bayou Boeuf on the West, & the sea on the South; At 7 AM we embark'd & steer'd out into Lake Palourde SSE, having light airs at ESE & cloudy weather

From the SE point of Shamrock Isle to LaCoup or the short cut to Bayou Boeuf, the course is SE distance 5 miles—

A mile from Shamrock Isle, is the appearance of a Bayou which runs in the same direction as Bayou Mellam; At the

In Lake Palourde
1 1/2 to 5 f't water

entrance of LaCoup²²³ we spoke to a Frenchman in a Canoe, who inform'd us that he had been towards

Lafourche to purchase provisions, but could not go through the canal²²⁴ from Lake Verrett for want of water.

At the mouth of LaCoup, the land tends N by E along Lafourche Island; Tiger Island, & Lafourche Island points, bear N & S of each other. The West side of Tiger Island ranges SW $\frac{1}{2}$ S, to West about 5 miles; in this bearing LaCoup is bounded by Tiger Island on the South & Lafourche Island on the North; We landed at a white mans [p. 30]

La Coup is bounded by La- house on Tiger Island where fourche & Tiger Islands Off LaCoup is from 80 to 100 yards **the mouth of LaCoup 6 feet wide, there is likewise a house on Lafourche Isle opposite to it, at the mouth 13 f't** own'd by one Garrett Taylor²²⁵

from Ouachitta—Pierre Moreaux²²⁶ at whose house we landed is a sailor, a native of old France, & is about 60 years old, his wife is a native of Bedford County Pennsylvania,²²⁷ about 33 & has two children the youngest a fine fat boy of a year old, their house is fix'd on a hill of clam shells,²²⁸ which bounds an Indian burial ground, from whence they frequently dig human bones, & once they found a whole skeleton; behind the hill is a piece of good alluvial land; as low as the surface of the water, the soil appears

²²³ Modern Morgan City beach.

²²⁴ The old Attakapas Canal from Lake Verret to Bayou Lafourche at Napoleonville. See footnote 62, above.

²²⁵ No information in addition to that given by Cathcart on this individual is available. His name does not appear in *American State Papers, Public Lands*.

²²⁶ Pierre Moreau owned a small plantation in Attakapas in 1819. He had been superintendent of a vacherie (ranch) on lower Bayou Teche prior to 1812; but, according to testimony given by him in that year, he was then only forty-five years of age, which would make him but fifty-two when Cathcart saw him in 1819. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 858; III, 235.)

²²⁷ An excellent illustration of the varied origins of inhabitants of the Attakapas region at that period.

²²⁸ An Indian mound or midden.

rich & produces red maize, cabbage, garlic, beans, & sweet potatoes—they have some poultry, & what I thought a curiosity, their dog which was very tame, eat corn with them in perfect harmony, picking the grain from the Cob with his teeth, & generously permitting an old hen to pick up all that fell on the ground—Not so their neighbour Garrett Taylor, who is a single man, & very lazy (as they say) & very frequently comes over to ask for provisions, & if refused mal-treats them & takes what he pleases; once he beat the woman & she thinks that he wishes to make them abandon their little plantation, where they have been settled in solitude these two years, in order that he might take possession of it, & benefit by their industry, for they are all squatters²²⁹ here & have an equal right to the soil; One would imagine that these poor neighbours would find a mutual benefit in living upon good terms with each other; but such a *Tyrant* is *Man!* that although the Bayou runs between them, it does not prevent feuds & persecution. Their residence are miserable huts, made of Cypress boards not near so clean, comfortable, or well furnish'd as the Indian Postions habitation; here we fill'd our water casks with pretty good water, & they were very civil to us—

From Moreaux we steer'd SE $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile S by W $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile S $\frac{1}{2}$ E $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles,²³⁰ on these courses are several plantations

In LaCoup 15 feet water. tolerably well fenced, one of them
12 feet water. was adorn'd with seven white headed children looking over the

fence with astonishment to see so large a ship as ours in their Bayou; In the centre of the last reach is a good plaster'd house, full as good as any of the houses at Franklin, with several out houses, which make a neat & comfortable appearance, steer'd S by W 1 mile to the entrance of Bayou Boeuf—

The banks of the water courses are pretty high, but descend to the centre,²³¹ which is lower than the surface of the water; there is the appearance of Live Oak on the margin, but of no importance the chief groth is Redoak, Cypress, & Myrtle, the under-wood Palmetto, small shrubs, & briars, & on the low margin, yellow coarse grass, on the last course the appearance of Live Oak rather improves [p. 31] On Lafourche, or the East side, no cane

²²⁹ There were numerous squatters on the public lands in Attakapas, and the United States government experienced great difficulty in adjusting many of the land claims advanced by inhabitants of that section of Louisiana.

²³⁰ This whole section from Lake Palourde is now called Bayou Boeuf.

²³¹ He means they descend away from the stream.

whatever grows, & little anywhere. Cowpen Island²³² lies South, at the entrance from La Coup to B'ou Boeuf where there is a Bayou Bouf runs between branch²³³ which runs SSE into Cowpen & Tiger Isles has 3 Bayou Derbon²³⁴ & from that to the sea, the SW branch on which we are to 4½ fathoms water in it runs into Berwick bay—Courses SW ¼, SW ½ W ¼ of a mile, to a plantation own'd by Alex'r Grassier²³⁵ a Frenchman, & his Father in law John Henry²³⁶ a Dutchman, steer'd from hence NW by N, 2 miles to a B'ou on Tiger Island,²³⁷ which runs E by N about 1 mile, then NW ½ W ½ mile to where we landed on Tiger Island to inspect, then W ½ N to W by S 1½ miles to Bayou Shafer,²³⁸ thence W by N to Bryants²³⁹ where we landed to look at the timber which Boles had prepared for Mr Livingston, to fulfil his contract with government—²⁴⁰

Where we landed on the South side of Tiger Island, which bounds the Northside of Bayou Boeuf, small cane was growing

²³² Modern Avoca Island.

²³³ Bayou Black.

²³⁴ Modern Bayou Terrebonne; other contemporaries of Cathcart also used his spelling of that name.

²³⁵ No such name appears in *American State Papers, Public Lands*. This may be Cathcart's phonetic spelling of any one of several French family names that occur in the Attakapas region.

²³⁶ John Henry occupied land on Bayou Teche, which he claimed under a Spanish order of survey dated 1786, as well as two other tracts in the same general locality. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 436, 437; III, 135.) This is probably the Dutchman referred to by Cathcart. Two other Henrys, "Jean Baptiste" and "Jean Baptiste Theodore", also appear in the records; but their names would indicate that they were the descendants of the Dutchman by a French mother, as it is not probable that the Dutchman would change his name to a French form. (*Ibid.*, II, 434, 435.)

²³⁷ Bayou Ramo.

²³⁸ Still called by that name.

²³⁹ Site of modern Morgan City. Christopher O'Brian, Sr., a native of Ireland, came to Virginia as a boy, where he later married and reared a family. He later removed to New Madrid (in modern Missouri) and resided there for a time, but his family suffered from ill health, and in December 1801 he obtained permission from the Spanish authorities in Baton Rouge and New Orleans to settle on lower Bayou Teche. He purchased the improvements previously made by Samuel Stout on land adjoining that of Talmadge Dunleavy (see footnote 207, above). After settling on Bayou Teche the name of the family was changed from "O'Brian" or "O'Brien" to "Bryant" or "Bryan", the last form being that now used by the descendants of the first settler. Christopher O'Brian, Sr., had at least two sons who appear to have been young men when they came to Louisiana: Christopher O'Brian, Jr. (called "Christie Bryant" by Cathcart; see footnote 245, below) and Luke Bryan (or "Bryant"). In 1802 the latter married Miss Rebecca W. Berwick, a daughter of Thomas Berwick, Sr., who had come to the Attakapas region in the Spanish period and settled on the lower Atchafalaya, and who gave his name to Berwick Bay. Christopher O'Brian, Sr., died before 1812, for on April 8th of that year the United States confirmed to his heirs a tract of land consisting of 640 acres at the spot where he had settled. On February 29, 1812, Luke Bryan (or "Bryant") was confirmed in a claim to 640 acres on Atchafalaya Bay; and in the same year Christopher O'Brian, Jr. (Cathcart's "Christie Bryant") was also confirmed in a claim to 640 acres on Lake Verrett, at the mouth of the canal leading to Bayou Lafourche. The heirs of Christopher O'Brian, Sr., claimed 1500 acres of land which had been occupied under the Spanish permit to settle, and they kept pressing this claim; but in 1816 the United States finally refused to confirm them in more than 640 acres, on the ground that the Spanish documents produced to support the claim failed to state the size of the original claimant's family. On May 1, 1811, Governor Claiborne appointed a "Bryant"—probably Luke Bryant, because of his marriage into the prominent Berwick family—as the first sheriff of the newly-created St. Mary Parish. Luke "Brien" had two slaves and Christopher "Brien" had three on the Berwick Bay plantation in 1813. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 434, 855, 857; III, 121, 148; William Henry Perrin, ed., *Southwest Louisiana, Biographical and Historical*, Part II, p. 138; Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX, 986; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

²⁴⁰ See footnote 152, above.

in abundance on the margin, & at 100 yards distance it was large and impassible, there was a bad groth of live oak on the ridge,

**Tiger Island or Bryants with
the boats head onshore we
had 6 feet water aft, & in
the chan'l 3 fath'm**

behind the low land or swamp, but of no consequence, as the land is not sufficiently elevated, or dry on this part of the Island, to produce good timber, although the exist-

ance of Cane (*Arundo gigantea*)²⁴¹ evinces that the soil is congenial to its groth—

We then cross'd over & landed on Cowpen Island,²⁴² or Rices claim, & found its aspect nearly similar to Tiger Island, consequently the same observations are applicable to both Islands, at this part of them—

We arrived at Bayou Shafer at 2h.30' PM, it enters SSW & runs in a semicircular direction for two leagues²⁴³ & then enters **Bayou Shafer Rices Isl'd** Berwicks bay, a little below Bryants plantation, opposite to B'ou Shafer, is Rices Island,²⁴⁴ which he inherits from his father, he claims Cowpen Island also, but on what terms is not known—

We landed on Bryants plantation, at the spot where Boles Cut & sided about 100 pieces of fine timber for Mr. Livingston, **Bryants plant'on** but he faild in the remainder of his contract, as the latter did with govern't Some of this timber is excellent, the largest piece contains about 40 Cubic feet or one Ton; in the woods are much larger trees, impervious at present, by a thick groth of cane from 30 to 40 feet high & 2 inches in diameter, all the trees in sight are of a middling size & are girded round & dead, which renders the wood hard to work.

In a conversation with Mr Christie Bryant²⁴⁵ at Franklin some time afterwards, he inform'd me, that a part of Tiger Island on which grow live oak, was the property of the United States; & that for a small consideration, he would dispose of all the

²⁴¹ See footnote 176, above.

²⁴² On the opposite side of Bayou Boeuf from the modern Morgan City; now called Bateman Island.

²⁴³ On modern topographical sheet eight and a half miles.

²⁴⁴ Named for Samuel Russel Rice, Sr., a native of Kentucky who had settled there prior to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. He had ten slaves on the plantation in 1813, and by 1816 he was producing sugar on the plantation. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 434; III, 217; *ibid., Commerce and Navigation*, I, 841; *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; Perrin, *Southwest Louisiana*, Part II, p. 299.)

²⁴⁵ Christopher O'Brian, Jr. See footnote 239, above.

live oak on his part of the Island to government, provided they would take it away as fast as they could cut & mold it—From this to the Teche, there is a quantity of fine live oak; but the cane brakes [p. 32] are so low, that it would be necessary to make a Causeway from 2 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, to bring the timber to navigable water in any direction—

Southwest from Bryants, is Rices new house, just at the entrance of Berwick bay, which is a bend of the Atchafalaia river, where the confluence of the Teche bears NW, westerly dist'ce 2 or 3 miles; from Rices Berwicks house²⁴⁶ bears WNW dist'ce $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile; here we landed. Mr Berwick is the son of the man who gave name to the bay, he has five children, who look healthy, he was born on this spot, is unletter'd, but civil & intelligent; he presented us with some good oranges fresh from his trees which are the first we have had since we left New Orleans—From Berwicks, to the mouth of the Teche is NW by W from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles; from the mouth of the Teche to Renthrops ferry is from NW by N to NW by W $\frac{1}{4}$ & then W't $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile to the landing at the ferry where we arrived at dark

The Teche in this reach is bounded by Reeds Island to the North & the main land on the South, which stretches along to Atchafalaia bay, & from thence to the sea—

On Mr Berwicks place are four Indian Mounds, which are a natural curiosity, the origin of which is veil'd by the lapse of time, they are situated at right angles, pointing to the four Cardinal points, including a square of about an Acre, in which about 30 years ago, there were several strata of ashes very visible, supposed to have accumulated from the council fires of the aborigines, who were of the Chetimacha tribe at that period, but who had not the least knowledge, even by tradition

²⁴⁶ On the site of the modern town of Berwick, across the bay from Morgan City. Thomas Berwick, Sr., was an early American settler in the Opelousas district, where he served as a surveyor as early as 1784. He later removed to the lower Atchafalaya region and occupied land on the bay which bears his name; and on September 5, 1811, his heirs were confirmed by the United States in title to a tract of 1,600 arpents there. The date of his death is unknown, but it was prior to 1811. In 1813 Joseph Berwick, son of Thomas Berwick, Sr., owned the old plantation and four slaves; and by 1816 he was cultivating sugar cane on a small scale. Cathcart's statement indicates that he had not increased his number of slaves by 1819, which was unusual for a planter in Attakapas in that period. The descendants of Thomas Berwick, Sr., remained prominent in the affairs of St. Mary Parish throughout the antebellum period. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 819, 821, 839, 841, 844; III, 103, 126, 135 173, 223; Perrin, *Southwest Louisiana*, Part II, p. 361; *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1814, pp. 34-36; *Planters' Banner*, February 17, April 6, 1848.)

tion of the origin, or even for what purpose those mounds were erected—It is therefore conjectured, that they are the work of the Atakapa's,²⁴⁷ who are reported to have been Cannibals (the word Atakapa meaning man-eater) this detestable tribe are now extinct, with the exception of a few families, who are said to exist on an Island to the westward; but I have not seen any person, who had either seen them, or could identify the situation of their abode—The bank of the river behind which these mounds are situated, is ten feet high, composed of Clam shells, on the fish of which, it is supposed they fed—The two which point on the bay, are about 250 yards apart—the Southernmost, which is the highest, is about 30 feet above the surface of its base, which is level with the water, its parallel companion, is not so large, but they are all of the same figure, which is the frustum of a Pyramid, of 60 yards, each side at the base decreasing, until at the summit, they are not more than 30, forming an ascent rather difficult—

[p. 33] On the North sides of the two Southern, & south sides of the Northern ones are gangways form'd by which to ascend; at the base of the southwestern mound, is a large pool of water, & on the top of the Northeastermost, is a large heap of ashes, which have been dug into, a small distance, but no discovery has been made, it is supposed to be the Altar on which they offer'd up sacrifice, where even human victims may have been immolated at the shrine of the offended Deity of the waters, to appease his dreadful wrath at the period of annual inundation; this is more probable as their name or national appellation, must undoubtedly be ascribed to some apparent cause, or quality, which characterized them as a tribe or nation.

It is conjectured that these mounds were erected at some remote period, as a place of retreat from the inundation of the Mississippi;²⁴⁸ this may have been the case, combined with a place of defense when attack'd by superior numbers, it is likewise probable that the waters might have risen far above their expectation, & overwhelm'd them at their last retreat, & not even left a vestage of their existance; or that the lapse of time has been so great, since they were erected that it has buried the tradition with its depositaries in the gulf of oblivion—

²⁴⁷ These mounds were probably long pre-Attakapan.

²⁴⁸ A common belief that mounds were built to escape flood waters, but quite as fallacious as that Egyptian pyramids were built for the same purpose.

To reconcile these opinions, it is necessary to examine the interior of the mounds, in which with the exception of a small space on the Northeastern Altar, & on the Southeastern, where Mr. Berwick's mother is inter'd, they have remain'd undisturbed for ages; were it not for their great magnitude, they might be supposed to be the repository of the bones of innumerable bodies of Indians, who died in battle, or by pestilence, & annually accumulated by natural deaths, which at different periods have been cover'd with Stratas of earth, but their vast size & regular form, is opposed to this opinion, we must therefore remain in comparative ignorance, until this curious work of the Sons of the forest, is explored to its base—

It is worthy of remark, that many human bones have been dug up, on Mr Berwicks plantation, in the vicinity of the mounds, while they have remained undisturb'd, Mr Berwick seems to have more genius to cultivate cotton, having rais'd last year 150,000 lbs on his plantation,²⁴⁹ with three Negroes, besides his family & household domestics, than to pry into the curiosities of antiquity, although they have been in his view for more than 30 years; We propose remaining here tomorrow, to refresh ourselves & crew, & to procure provisions for our next cruise; this is really not the party of pleasure, that it is supposed to be at the seat of government; it is by far the hardest service as we pursue it, that I have ever experienced—²⁵⁰

Sunday 24th Remain'd here to refresh; Mr Renthrop & his Son are Taylors natives of Westphalia, came to Philadelphia some years ago, & have traveld through many places in the United

Renthrops Ferry States since, & about [p. 34] nine years ago settled upon this spot, they keep a tolerable good table for this part of the world, their beds are clean, provisions wholesome, liquors whiskey, taffia & bad claret, they are obliging but wholy Illiterate. Their farm is not very extensive, but their garden is productive, they raise poultry & hogs in abundance, & some fine cattle, & this is the first placé we have had milk with our coffee since we left New Orleans;

²⁴⁹ Cotton was still the chief staple crop in this region in 1819, the big shift to sugar cane not coming until the following decade. However, Joseph Berwick and seven other planters in Attakapas were producing sugar as early as 1816. (*Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39.)

²⁵⁰ Cathcart had experienced some hard service during his many years spent in the Mediterranean area, and he appears anxious to impress upon the authorities in Washington the fact that his present service is no mere pleasure jaunt.

fresh butter²⁵¹ is entirely out of the question, & salt²⁵² cannot be procured except in the City; hogs lard is made its substitute in all culinary purposes, the land everywhere is rich alluvion, capable of producing every necessary of life, & many of the luxuries; but owing to the prevalence of slavery, the whites are lazy, & in general dissipated, & confine themselves to the culture of cotton & sugar²⁵³ alone, because more productive with less labour; The flats (so call'd) used at this Ferry, are form'd of two large canoes, on which is a platform for horses,²⁵⁴ the price of carriage for a man & horse is 12 dollars, & for black cattle 1.50cs per head²⁵⁵ they cross the Lake to the canal which runs into Lake Verrett from Lafourche²⁵⁶ a distance of 30 miles, & from thence passengers proceed to Donaldsonville, & take passage in Steam boats, that pass either up or down the Mississippi, at the rate of 12½ cts per mile²⁵⁷ The flats or double canoes, row with two or more oars, & sail when the wind is fair, the rudder is on one canoe only, the pilot sits on the platform, & steers with a yoke & lines, as he would a gig or wherry—

Monday 25th Embark'd at 7 AM, bound down the Atchafalaya to Rices Island, one mile from which, at the mouth of a Bayou is the residence of Mr Paris,²⁵⁸ whose name the Island²⁵⁹ bears, & which he claims by right of settlement, or pre-emption alone, it is supposed, it makes the NW side of the Bayou where Rices Island ends on the Atchafalaya, the general aspect here, is some shrubby

Parises Island no bottom oak, bad Cypress, & Myrtle. From with 8 fathoms line, cur't the mouth of Bayou Paris,²⁶⁰ to the running SW 1½ miles per 1st point, the course continues SW hour vide page by S for one mile where we landed on low ground difficult of access

owing to shrubs & underwood. At the bank we dug some Sassa-

²⁵¹ In spite of the fact that Southwest Louisiana was an important grazing country which supplied much meat to the New Orleans market, the lack of dairy products for table use is commented upon by other visitors to the Attakapas region in those days.

²⁵² It is interesting to note that salt for domestic use had to be imported from New Orleans in those days, and that the presence of some of the world's largest salt deposits there was unknown until several decades later.

²⁵³ Sugar was just coming into importance on some of the plantations on lower Bayou Teche in 1819, but cotton was then and for a long time thereafter the chief staple crop of most of the planters. (*Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39.)

²⁵⁴ This is an interesting description of the type of ferryboat then in common use. Double "canoes" under the platform made sideways tipping of the boat impossible. This type of ferry-boat is still used in lower Louisiana.

²⁵⁵ Tolls for service were specified in the legislative acts which granted ferry franchises.

²⁵⁶ See footnote 62, above.

²⁵⁷ This is an interesting item on the passenger fares charged by Mississippi River steam-boats in those early days.

²⁵⁸ Named for Lemuel Paris who resided there. Further on in the Journal Cathcart states that he was a squatter. His name does not appear in *American State Papers, Public Lands*. See footnote 428, below.

²⁵⁹ Modern Beers Island.

²⁶⁰ Modern Bayou Prague.

frass root (*Laurus sassafrass*)²⁶¹ & saw some maple (*Acer rubrum*) & in 20' minutes walk, saw about 20 live oak trees—from 3 to 6 feet in diam'r, well limb'd, this ridge runs farther, but we could not penetrate for underwood, the Pilot informs us that there are several ridges on the Island, cover'd with trees of the same dimensions.

At this point a swamp commences of Branch willow,²⁶² & yellow grass, which runs into the little Lake,²⁶³ from South to SSE $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile where we ran aground, 100 yards from the **3 to 8 fathoms in the chan'l** shore, & immediately deepen'd to 3-4 & the next cast had no bottom with 8 fathom line out.

The points at the mouth of the southern extremity of Bayou Paris bearing from each other SSE & NNW, Course up the Bayou at its entrance East, winding to the Northward, round Parises, dividing it from Rices Island—

[p. 35] From the southern extremity of Bayou Paris in the little Lake, the course is SSW along the main on the right, & a swamp, which is made an Island by Bayous Shafer, Paris & little Lake Atchafalaia, which is half a mile to its contraction, where Little Lake no bottom in 8 fathoms Off the point $5\frac{1}{2}$ Fathoms Atchafalaia Bay—
8 fathoms— it enters the river again, & is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile across; it is like Berwicks bay, nothing more than a large bend of the River, & improperly call'd by the inhabitants a lake; the

river in general is about 200 yards wide, here the main is composed of low ground & grassy swamp, & at the opposite side it is all swamp for a considerable distance; steer'd into the big lake,²⁶⁴ which more properly ought to be calld the commencement of Atchafalaya Bay S by W $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$, & SE by S $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the mouth of the Bayou Shafer, the land appears right a head like an Island which we leavè on the right hand or NE of us, from Bayou Shafer when it bore NE 1 mile, the land tends NNE & SSW, the Bayou runs in NE $\frac{1}{2}$ E—From off Bayou Shafer, which may be known by a hummock of Cypress trees on the right or SE shore, & by a long grassy marsh on the other side, by which we are nearly surrounded, nothing but a few branch willows & Myrtles are to be seen—

²⁶¹ Now *Sassafras variifolium* (Salisb.) Kuntze.

²⁶² Two species of willow are known for Louisiana, namely, black willow, *Salix nigra* Marshall, and sandbar willow, *Salix interior* Rowlee, both of which are very common in the area surveyed by Cathcart.

²⁶³ Bateman Lake.

²⁶⁴ Sweet Bay Lake.

Steer'd SSW $\frac{1}{2}$, WSW 1, SSW 1 mile to Meridian, bent a fishing line on to the lead line, & got bottom in 8 fathoms, S by E to S $\frac{1}{2}$ E 2 miles to shell Island,²⁶⁵ on which is a clump of live oak, of a low shrubby groth, which is the first we have seen since the marsh commenced, at 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ PM it bore WSW & may be known by a

9 Fathoms off Shell Isl'd white shelly or sandy beach; from Shell Island to the point, which we must pass (SW point of the

marsh) to go to Deer Island, on which were a prodigious number of Pelicans, is S by W dist. 3 miles: At 2PM, the wind was WSW right in from the Gulf which made a considerable swell; the first points (Deer & Presidents points)²⁶⁶ going out of the Atchafalaia bears W by N & E by S of each other dist'ce 3 Miles, at the mouth of the river close along shore there is from 3 to 4 feet water; we kept along the point SE $\frac{1}{2}$ S & bore away into Deer creek,²⁶⁷ which divides Deer from Plumb Islands NE by N; it is bounded by grassy marsh on both sides, a crooked Bayou runs through it, about 100 yards from the 1st point, which we did not enter, supposing there was not water in it for our boat; the course kept winding from NE by N to North 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles enter'd another creek N'th 50 yards & then another, just the breadth of the boat, which runs W by S 250 yards where we landed on the Cane marsh close to the shore; the soil was rich alluvion, full of Deer tracks, much rooted up by them & Racoons; here an Owl was shot, who hail'd us on our arrival, although it was daylight, this I must allow was ungrateful, but I have received returns for favours confer'd; sentimentally as bad as death! from the Lords of the creation Man! & I had no agency in the murder of this emblem of wisdom, & would much rather it had lived—

We found a ridge of live oak on this Island 100 yards wide, & more [p. 36] than half a mile long, which containd about 100 trees, a few of which were from 3 to 5 feet diam'r, but the Island is entirely surrounded by marsh, which would render the transportation of timber very difficult & expensive, even if a sufficient quantity existed to render it an object worthy the attention of government. On this Island no mark of the axe appears, it is in a perfect state of nature, its groth is wild cherry (*Cerasus virginiana*)²⁶⁸ honey locust (*Gleditchia triacanthos*) maple (*acer*

²⁶⁵ Still so called, on right bank where the river discharges into Atchafalaya Bay.

²⁶⁶ These names not used on the topographic sheet.

²⁶⁷ Modern Deer Island Bayou.

²⁶⁸ Now *Prunus virginiana* L.

rubrum) & live oak underwood, Canes, Briars, vines and small shrubs; common to all the Islands which we have visited, & which is already described; we likewise found wild onions or shallots,²⁶⁹ which has just commenced vegetation, & had not yet form'd bulbs, of which we pick'd a quantity an excellent anti-scorbutic, & no bad auxiliary to salt beef and biscuit—

Deeming the groth of this Island of little importance for naval purposes, we ran out into the bay, when the 2nd point of Atchafalaia river or Presidents point, & Plumb point, bore E by S of each other (& vice versa) the 1st point being calld Deer point, steer'd S by E past Plumb point to the southernmost point of Plumb Island, being distant 4 miles from the Bayou, at sunset run into a Creek, or Bayou²⁷⁰ on Plumb Island, 200 yards East to SE, where we encamp'd for the night—

The land on this Island is very rich, fine grass fit for pasture grows on it in abundance, & from the number of tracks we saw, Deer must be very numerous, several trees have been cut down

Plumb Isl'd & Creek 8 to 9 & taken away, as it is very easy of access, & could be clear'd at a small expense & made a delightful spot,

but its local situation is not favourable to population; we found a small root here, which when roasted resembled the West India yam²⁷¹ (but not in shape) the French call it Pomme de terre sauvage, & some call it Coco, the root of a grass, which renders land less valuable, as it is impossible to eradicate it; it may be a specie of the Jerusalem artichoke, but this we could not ascertain, as it was perfectly dry, without vegetation; Hogs, Deer, and Racoons seek for this root with avidity, & fatten on it— On this Isl'd we found from 40 to 50 live oak trees, not exceeding 2½ inches in diam'r with small branches which renders them less valuable, & about 300 saplings, the groth in general in other respects was similar to Deer Island.

For the contents of the different Islands, & places, which we have inspected, or may inspect, we refer to the Surveyors report,

²⁶⁹ These may be *Allium canadense* L., a common wild onion in many sections of Louisiana.

²⁷⁰ Probably modern Plumb Bayou or Palmetto Bayou.

²⁷¹ A curious mixing of information. Coco grass, in reality a sedge, *Cyperus retundus* L., is a pest in gardens and produces subterranean tubers about one-half an inch in diameter. These are fibrous, hard, and scarcely edible for humans. Today there are some people of French descent who use the term "pomme de terre sauvage" for the ground artichoke or Jerusalem artichoke, *Helianthus tuberosus* L. Louisiana is within the original range of this species according to Small. The comparison of the West Indian yam suggests another possibility. There is a wild potato vine, *Ipomoea pandurata* (L.) Mey, which is widely distributed in lower Louisiana; however, the underground stems of this could scarcely be designated as small.

Note in which the number of Acres in each spot, or Island, ought to be calculated, in order to ascertain, with as much precision, as is practicable, the number of trees on each—

Tuesday 26th Embark'd & steer'd through Plumb Creek to the contrary end from which we came in; Course out E, to SE, with marsh on both sides, Plumb Island NW point bearing W by W 1/2 S distance 2 Miles [p. 37] & a point on the main or marshy peninsula E by S 1/2 S dist'ce 2 miles²⁷² 60 yards from the mouth of the Bayou where we came out, is a Bayou which runs into Plumb Island lake,²⁷³ which is a sheet of water inclosed by the marsh which surrounds, which no doubt abounds with fish. Here ends our third Inspection and Survey

*Fourth Inspection & Survey
from Deer & Plumb Islands towards the Coast between them
& Lafourche*

Tuesday 26th Having got through Plumb creek, at 8 1/2 AM Atchafalaia Bay extent from we steer'd to the south point²⁷⁴ of E to W 25 miles, from N to the Peninsula, bearing SE by S S 13 miles dist, 8 or 10 miles, the centre of Plumb Island bearing NW by N dist, 1 mile—

At 10h.30' minutes, having run in 30 inches water for some time, the boat ran aground on a muddy bottom mix'd with oister shells, the N'th point of Marsh Island²⁷⁵ bearing SE by S 5 or 6 miles, the point on the Peninsula SE 3 miles, the bite or bay of the said NE 3 miles, & the coast runing about SE from Plumb Island, we steer'd to the Eastward to clear the bank & deepen'd to 4 feet water, the point on Marsh Island bearing from the point on the Peninsula SE by S 3 miles, West point²⁷⁶ of branch willow Island

Marsh Isl'd Bay SE 2 miles when we deepen'd to 12 feet, & steer'd out between the Peninsula & the Island ENE, in 3 fathom water, the cur't seting WSW 1 mile per hour— In this bay which we call Marsh Island bay²⁷⁷ we had from 2 to 5 feet water, which deepen'd to 12 feet off the point

At 1 PM we landed on a shelly point,²⁷⁸ on the South side of the Peninsula, the West end of branch willow Island, bearing NW

²⁷² Cathcart's directions are not sufficiently detailed to positively identify all points mentioned in this course.

²⁷³ Probably Plumb Lake.

²⁷⁴ Probably Shell Point.

²⁷⁵ Probably Mosquito Point; the island of which Point au Fer is the western tip.

²⁷⁶ This point is nameless.

²⁷⁷ Now Lower Four League Bay.

²⁷⁸ Near the mouth of Blue Hammock Bayou.

by W $\frac{1}{2}$ W, 7 or 8 miles, & the NW point of marshy Island W by N, those are the outermost points, which form the channel between branch willow and Marshy Island, which is 2 or 3 miles wide; the centre of the said bearing from the point we are now on W by N $\frac{1}{2}$ N dist'ce 7 or 8 miles; the Coast runs from the NW point of Marshy Island without any apparent opening to a point²⁷⁹ about 10 miles distant from us, bearing SE $\frac{1}{2}$ E in the form of the segment of a circle, between those points

The boat being 2 miles distant from 10 mile point, the SE point of Marshy Island bore W by N 10 miles distant;²⁸⁰ continued our course SE by E, the SW point of the main in view; bearing SE by S distance 10 miles, runing along the land from 10 mile point to a point 3 miles SE of it,²⁸¹ from which the said SW point bore SE, we landed on the Marsh on the main side at sunset & encamp'd for the night—

Being literally cover'd, & black with Musquitos, which we found insufferable, we set fire to the Marsh, the wind being on the land, it burn'd incessantly for several days; in the front, in a small aperture, open to the Bay, we placed our tents, & in every other part, we were enveloped with flame, which receded from us in an exact circle, with surprising velocity, the sight of which, being a dark night, the first of the Moon, was [p. 38] horribly sublime; we look'd like the Souls of departed sinners, wandering on the banks of the Styx, nor did we want a Charon, in the shape of our Old Pilot, whom we sent to Phlaegeton for Oisters in a small canoe, & seeing us all in a blaze, on his return did not know where to land, & whoop'd in a voice something between an Owl & a Jackale, when we fired a musket to shew him our position—The Oisters he brought us, were very acceptable, & were the first we had eaten this cruise; for we had made but a slight dinner, & although we were all in a blaze, we had not anything to make a fire sufficient to make coffee of which we were much in need

Wednesday 27th We embark'd at 7 AM, & went over to the Island near which we had procured the Oisters, it is 3 or 4 miles from where we encamp'd the water is very shoal, & our Oars touch'd the mud all the way—Some seagulls & many Pelicans some of which were a beautiful white, lined the margin of the Marsh.

²⁷⁹ Probably at entrance of Bayou Grand Caillou.

²⁸⁰ Cathcart is correct in his distance.

²⁸¹ This section is now marsh land.

At 8h.30' we were in the pass on the East end of Marsh Island & the main; the long spit which I calld barren Island, is only a continuation of Marsh Isl'd, & the
Marsh Isl'd or Oister Pass
2½ to 4 fathoms

channel ought to be calld Marsh Island channel,²⁸² as there is no opening to the bay between this & Point au Fer to the W'ward this being the mouth of the first passage to the Gulf of Mexico to the Eastward of that point—We steer'd into this pass S by E ¼ & SSW ¾ of a mile, then from SE by E to East 200 yards when we had 2½ Fathom water, this Bay or outlet runs from S by E to SSW at its entrance, to ENE & then back the same way to SSW where it runs into the Gulf, being 5 miles long, its bottom a continued bed of Oisters deepen'd our water to 4 fathoms, the current runing South 2 miles per hour.

In this pass were some fine Courlieus,²⁸³ ducks; marsh hawks, & Pelicans in large numbers; at 10 AM we landed on the NW point of the Marsh, next the end of Marsh Island & boild some beef, being without any provisions dress'd; At 1h.30' PM we embark'd again having feasted luxuriously on stew'd Oisters & pompons; on this point there grew some shrubs, amongst which was the Capia opuntia—²⁸⁴ We steer'd for the nearest point on the main SE, the current (it being flood tide) against us runing NW 1½ miles per hour—

From Plumb Island to the mouth of this pass is 36 miles,²⁸⁵ in this reach is about 50 yards wide, its depth 2½ fathoms; the nearest point of land on the main bears SE ½ S, where we had only 3 feet water Steerd SE by E 1 mile to the next point, East 4 to the next, which makes the westernmost point of de large,²⁸⁶ or Buffalo Bayou, which bears from us NNE dist. 1 mile; East to the next point²⁸⁷ 4 or 5 miles where we encamp'd for the night—

Between each of the above mention'd points are bays of more than a mile depth & all along the preceding courses, we had from 3 to 6 feet water, bounded by a continued marsh, almost without a shrub, & coverd with yellow [p. 39] grass²⁸⁸ & the margin cover'd

²⁸² Modern Oyster Bayou.

²⁸³ Curlews.

²⁸⁴ There are two or three species of cactus in Louisiana, one of wihch is very common on the Indian mounds and middens in the coastal marshes and on some of the coastal islands. These prickly pears are now placed in the genus Opuntia.

²⁸⁵ Allowing for great change in the configuration of the land, this distance is far too much.

²⁸⁶ Bayou de Large.

²⁸⁷ Near the mouth of Grand Bayou de Large.

²⁸⁸ Elsewhere in the manuscript will be found references to yellow grass, coarse yellow grass, and rank yellow grass. The plant is not definitely identifiable from such references; however, the specific location indicates brackish salt water marshes. Among the dominant grasses of these salt marshes are the cord grasses, *Spartina cynosuroides* (L.) Roth and *Spartina alterniflora* Loisel, to which, in winter, these names could be appropriately applied.

with Pelicans; In the bay were great numbers of small Porpusses, in 3 feet water, some grey, & some white, they are from 3 to 4 feet long, come close to the boat, & are very nimble, the French call them Marsoin, the Americans black fish, they differ in nothing but in size & colour from the Sea porpuss, except that their skins are smoother, at 4h.30' PM the middle entrance of Bayou de Large or Buffalo bore due North dist. 1 mile, having a clump of trees over it, at the distance of 4 or 5 miles; the banks high of Clam, & other shells, the marsh inside of them very low & infested with millions of Musquitos which are insufferable; There are 3 entrances to this Bayou which flow in different directions to their junction, where they make one stream & end in the marsh, this stream in its passage runs into a small lake, which is nothing more than a swell of the same Bayou—

Thursday 28th Embark'd at 7 AM, & row'd round the point, the easternmost point of Bayou Buffalo N by E 1 mile, continued East 2 miles to the 2nd point, 2 do to 3rd p't 3 do to 4th p't 5 do to 5th p't 13 miles due East in all between the 2 last points the bay inshore was 2 miles deep, from the 5th p't to the centre of the Bay, course SE by E dist'ce 5 miles, from whence we made said & beat up towards Derniere Isle,²⁸⁹ course made good ESE 7 miles at 3 PM the East point bore E by S 7 & the West point SE by E 7 miles distant, being off the centre of the Island, which runs E by N, & W by S about 10 miles, at a distance from the main of 14 miles We row'd in, ESE to a hummock of shrubs, & then along

We had 10 f't water to the Coast E & E by S, having sent within 2 miles of the shore our Pilot a head in our canoe upon discovery; he return'd at 3 PM, on Derniere Isle Friday morning, in a Para agua²⁹⁰

with a black man named Casimere Romani,²⁹¹ who with two others are establish'd on the Island to catch fish & turtle for the New Orleans market,²⁹² under the direction of their master, Pierre de Nettei,²⁹³ who lives on the Teche; we steer'd in South, to the creek where these men had their habitation, & landed not long before daylight, having been all night in the boat, perfectly tired of the expedition; being weary, & hungry, the black men let us boil some coffee at their fire, & we retired to our tent, but could not sleep

²⁸⁹ The famous Last Isle, now eroded to a group of islands.

²⁹⁰ An old spelling for "pirogue", a type of canoe still common in lower Louisiana.

²⁹¹ No further information is available on this individual.

²⁹² It is interesting to note that at this early date fish and turtle were being supplied to the New Orleans markets from points thus far west on the Gulf Coast.

²⁹³ No further information is available on this individual. His name would seem to indicate that he was an early Italian entrepreneur engaged in the Louisiana fishing industry.

for musquitos, & the smell of the offals of the fish, which had been thrown on the beach, & were putrified; we unanimously resolved that this was not a party of pleasure, altho our friends might differ from us in opinion—

Friday 29th Remain'd onshore all day to refresh ourselves, & the people who were nearly exhausted—Derniere Isle, is the last Island going to the W'ward from Timballier bay, none being between it & marsh Island, the West end of which is point au Fer;

Thermometer 65: 72: 65— It is a sandy spit thrown up by the sea, distant from the main 14 or 15 miles, without any vegetation [p. 40] except a few shrubs amongst which is the Capia opuntia or prickly pear²⁹⁴ & some rank yellow grass²⁹⁵—The Creek which we enterd is 50 or 60 yards wide, & at low tide, not more than 15 inches deep, in a narrow channel, which our Pilot with difficulty found; Casimere Romannis establishment consists of two wooden huts, & a shed to cure fish in, it is surrounded by the Bayou & forms a small Island of itself; the whole extent of this Island is 10 or 11 miles²⁹⁶ & runs nearly WNW, & ESE, is an excellent fishing place, & abounds in Turtle; Casimere caught five today, the largest weighing 300 lbs, for which he asked 7 dollars, he keeps them in pens made with stakes in the water—Tiger cats²⁹⁷ are very numerous here; likewise Ducks & black

Fish caught at Derniere Isle Green Turtle, Sheeps head, Drum & Red fish, Salmon,²⁹⁸ trout, Sting rays, Bass, Whittings,²⁹⁹ & several other sorts with which a large canoe was half loaded in two hours birds as large as crows, Pelicans, sea gulls, cormorants, & other aquatic birds not fit for food. The greatest curiosity on this Island, is a large Canoe made out of one Cypress tree, 35 feet long, 4½ wide & 4 deep & very well form'd³⁰⁰—

This day our Thermometer had been broke by the carelessness of our people, but Nobody as usual was obliged to bear the blame. I likewise made an essay in the culinary art, & cook'd a fine Tirtle—which my messmates prais'd very much, & said I was calculated to be head cook to Helioga-

²⁹⁴ See footnote 284, above.

²⁹⁵ See footnote 288, above.

²⁹⁶ This is an underestimate. The present Wine Island is only two miles long and is a continuation of Last Isle. In Cathcart's day the eastern portion of Last Isle was doubtless included with Wine Island.

²⁹⁷ Probably wild cats.

²⁹⁸ It is questionable whether salmon was found in these waters.

²⁹⁹ Whiting, commonly called mullet today.

³⁰⁰ This large type of dugout was common in lower Louisiana in those days, but it was a novelty to Cathcart.

bulus,³⁰¹ but I attribute all my merit, which no doubt was very great, to their good appetite; poor devils, we were half starved, & I scalded my lips more than once tasting the soup before it was done—

Saturday 30th Last night we sent our boat out of the Creek at high water, & having procured a grapnel, water cask, water & provisions, Embark'd at Sunrise in the Canoes, & went to our boat laying off NNW distant 1 mile Steer'd, ENE to East 5 or 6 miles, & at 8 AM enter'd a Bayou which cuts of a piece of Marsh, & makes an Island at the distance of 200 yards, from the East end of Derniere Isle, leaving a pass³⁰² between. The **Isle au Vins** Bayou which we are in, is half a mile wide, & 5½ fathoms deep to abreast of the Isle au Vins³⁰³ the course is from E to NE, dist. 5 or 6 miles

The Isle au Vins is a continued Marsh which runs ENE and WSW, is 12 miles long³⁰⁴ & from 1 to 2 wide; the passage through between it, & the main, which is 7 miles over, is interspersed with Marsh Islands, or rather a marsh, intersected by Bayous, which renders it very intricate, it is calld Lake Palto,³⁰⁵ a corruption of **Lake Palto or Poule d'Eau** Poule d'Eau. The passage through has from 9 to 10 feet Spits- runs ENE, at 10h.10' AM steer'd bergen has close to it 2 to 4 ESE still runing along the Isle au f't water Vins; At 11 AM the wind came round to NW & blew very fresh,

which induced us to make a harbour in Oister shell cove,³⁰⁶ a spit running out cover'd with Oister shells not more than 100 yards long & 20 wide, about one mile from the shore & entirely surrounded by water, where we encamp'd, & a storm ensuing we remaind here all night; this spit at low water is double the extent that it is at high water; here according to Darby³⁰⁷ ends the Isle [p. 41] au Vins, but it continues for 2 or 3 leagues farther & our Pilot informs us that the first pass³⁰⁸ to the sea is between it & Cat Island—

³⁰¹ Reference is to Heliogabalus, the adopted name of Varius Avitus Bassianus, a Roman emperor (A. D. 218-222), infamous for shameless profligacy.

³⁰² Probably modern Whiskey Pass.

³⁰³ Wine Island.

³⁰⁴ See footnote 296, above.

³⁰⁵ Lake Pelt.

³⁰⁶ Probably near the eastern end of Isles Dernieres.

³⁰⁷ William Darby, *A Geographical and Historical Description of the State of Louisiana.* (New York, 1817).

³⁰⁸ Probably Cat Island Pass.

Sunday 31st At 8 AM embark'd & stree'd from Spitsbergen to the entrance of Petite Caillou;³⁰⁹ for 200 yards at the mouth of this Bayou there is only 1 foot water, consequently should we find

**Thermometer 57°: 65°: 64°
Wind NNE Petite Caillou at
the mouth 1 foot water In
the Bayou 3 to 5 feet—to
1½ feet—muddy bottom**

timber, it cannot be convey'd to the sea, outside of the Isle au Vins, without great trouble and expense, course up NE 1½ miles NNW 1½ do, at 3 miles from its mouth it turn'd to the NW where we

grounded & a creek or inlet runs SE to the sea, between the Marshy main & Cat Island;³¹⁰ The Bayou runs in different courses from WNW to NNE for 14 or 15 miles up to the first clump of shrubby live oak, which are small, & not fit for any Naval purpose, or worth attention—

At 5h.30' we camp'd on the West side of Petite Caillou, where it was 30 or 40 yards wide; the Musquitos were not numerous, but their absence was supplied by myriads of gnats & sand flees, which were equally insufferable, & render'd our situation very uncomfortable—

Monday 1st February—1819 Embark'd at 8 AM, & steer'd from N'th to NNE up the Bayou the bank is 3 or 4 feet high, the live oak on which would hardly make a club for Hercules; the

**Thermometer
50°: 76°: 82°: 65°
Wind NE**

ground in the rear is a morass or swamp, which serves as a receptacle for noxious vapours & all the insects which are calculated to render life miserable; Pharaoh with all his plagues, was not half so much tormented as we were last night; nor did Stern in the plenitude of his malediction curse poor Obadiah with more spleen than I did the insects that tormented me last night, which for me was sleepless.

At 9 AM we pass'd a Bayou calld Crocodile, or Crocodrills,³¹¹ which is 16 miles from the mouth of Petite Caillou, which runs for 3 or 4 miles from N to NW where it narrows to 30 yards wide, & here we saw a Bald Eagle, which was the only thing which excited our curiosity or reliev'd the monotony of the scene, if we except the cries of wild cats which were in numbers in our vicinity last night; At 11AM the Pilot inform'd us that there was not water for

³⁰⁹ Little, or Petit, Caillou.

³¹⁰ Although there is Cat Island Pass, there is no longer a Cat Island. Darby's map shows a line of islands extending from Wine Island to the north of Timbalier Island. Cat Island was probably one of this group.

³¹¹ Probably near the present Bayou Cocodrie, but referring to the west bank tributary of Little Caillou.

our boat for more than 3 or 4 miles farther, that he had traversed all these Bayous, from this to Lafourche, including Grand Caillou & both Derbons,³¹² that the depth of water, soil, and groth of timber, was the same, as what we had seen here, & having proceeded up this Bayou for 18 or 20 miles without finding a tree fit for any naval purposes, not even one fit to make a good knee, we deem'd it unnecessary to proceed any farther, in quest of what does not exist; & from the aspect of the country never can exist; we determined to retrograde, & accordingly retraced our Course down the Bayou & encamp'd & spent a night equally as disagreeable as the last—

[p. 42] *Tuesday 2nd* Embark'd this morning, & notwithstanding the weather was cloudy with evident signs of an approaching storm; we determined to endeavour to get to Derniere Isle tonight if possible; at Meridian the gale commenced, & we endeavour'd to make the first port, which was only an opening in the Marsh; here we landed (if I may use the term the ground trembled under us, nevertheless we pitch'd our Tents, & run a pole 10 feet long, nearly its whole length, into the mud, to secure them, but the gale was so heavy, that we had much trouble to prevent them from being carried away, the boat was in eminent danger of being stove or driven high up on the Marsh; had this happen'd we had a resource in our canoe which we could have sent to Derniere Isle for assistance, which shews the propriety of having purchased her, indeed no boat ought to go on the coast without one; At 2 PM the gale abated, & soon afterwards clear'd up, when we proceeded towards our first destination, & steer'd for Casimeres hut,³¹³ being drench'd with the rain; the current set us to leeward, & we were obliged to send the Pilot to search for the

Thermometer 66°: 75°; 68°— inlet; he return'd at 3, & at 4 PM
Wind N'th to NW— on Wednesday we arrived at his hut, almost froze; the weather

being remarkably cold after the gale, here we found a good fire, which was very acceptable, considering that we had been siting all night in the boat, in wet cloaths, which was prevented from drying on us, by the very heavy dew which falls in these latitudes; the Musquitos now attack'd us in Myriads which render'd patience extremely necessary—

Wednesday 3rd Remaind on Derniere Isle to refresh, and were all taken sick in the night, owing to the quality of our food,

³¹² Terrebonne.

³¹³ On Isle Derniere. See footnote 291, above.

& the noxious vapours from a fish shed in our vicinity, I emitted a considerable quantity of Bile as green as verdigrease, which probably under providence saved my life, we were tormented incessantly with mosquitos & other noxious insects³¹⁴ which infested this place, the wind blew all day a strong gale from the SE which

Thermometer dispersed the noxious vapours & refresh'd us
61°, 78°, 66°— considerably; we took everything out of the
Wind SE— boat, clean'd her, fill'd our water, purchased a barrel of biscuit & some fish, & prepared for sea.

Thursday 4th After a most miserable night, spent in ruminating on the cause of our sickness, suffocated nearly with stench from the Fish shed, & almost frantic with the torture occasion'd by millions of mosquitos, we rose early, & was cheer'd by a glorious Sun illuminating a most brilliant atmosphere, sufficient to revive all nature, accompanied by a fine breeze at ENE, but here again we **Thermometer** were disappointed, & could not depart as we had determined, in consequence of its being low water,
58°: 76°; 69° at 10h.45' AM the tide serv'd, & we took an eternal **Wind ENE** farewell of Derniere Isle, & the hospitable Fishermen, who done every thing in their power to accomodate us, for our money, which is more than we can say of the white inhabitants of Attakapas—

We steer'd NW 1/2 N for Oister shell bank³¹⁵ before mention'd, the distance is 28 or 29 miles where we encamp'd at 4PM—

[p. 43]

Fifth Inspection & Survey

Commencing at Plumb Island towards Belle Isle

Friday 5th Our indisposition continued by fatigue, & exposure to the weather induced us yesterday evening to retire to our bed on the shell bank, before dark, previous to which, we had taken great pains to prevent the Musquitos from annoying us, & supposed ourselves impervious to their attacks; but we were mistaken, at first they only regaled us with their music, but when exhausted nature sunk into repose, they invaded us in hecatombs, & at daylight we hardly knew each other; this hasten'd our departure from this abode of misery, leaving three fishermen who were loading their boat with oysters to supply the inhabitants of the Atchafalaya & the Teche;³¹⁶ We steer'd in through a strong cur-

³¹⁴ The area has not changed in this respect since 1819.

³¹⁵ On the shore of Four League Bay.

³¹⁶ It is interesting to note that even at that early date there was a regular distribution of oysters from the Gulf coast to settlements higher up on the Teche and the Atchafalaya.

rent, until we open'd Marsh Island Bayou,³¹⁷ having a low marsh on each side of us, then West, WSW, up to NE by N, 5 miles where we grounded at 9 PM [AM] & at 10h.30' AM experienced a heavy gale accompanied with tremenous thunder & lightning, the rain fell in torrents, which wet everything in the boat, when the wind changed suddenly to NW, accompanied by a shower of hail, the particles of which were near a quarter of an inch in diameter, & appear'd like christalizations of water, or small angular pieces of ice, which obliged us to seek shelter from its violence, under what ever presented itself; the boat was not in more than 6 inches water buried in soft mud, it being low water, there was no alternative, but for the people to go overboard to lighten the boat, (having first loaded our canoe) & to haul her through the mud, this they effected in two hours with great difficulty, wading nearly to their middle in soft mud, poor fellows, I pitied them from my soul; & recommend them to the liberality of government, as they really deserve one months extra pay for the very hard service which they have preform'd during the whole of our different excursions, & this day they suffer'd much from the sudden change & coldness of the weather— The gale continuing, we landed on the Marsh³¹⁸ which we had set fire to, on the 26th Ult'o, but in consequence of the heavy rain which had fallen it would not bear

Thermometer

64°, 68°, 64°

Wind ESE

Marsh Isl'd Bay

NW Gale

in myriads—

our weight, we therefore bore away for Plumb Island NW to branch willow pass,³¹⁹ & West through, being 12 miles to the one mile pass, which runs through W & then NW to Plumb Island 5 miles, where we arrived at sunset & were received by our tormentors the mosquitos

In the current which was runing through Branch willow Bayou at the rate of 2 miles per hour, an Otter or Muskrat, swam close [p. 44] to the boat, & seem'd to implore assistance, we would have pitied the poor fellow, had not our pity been exhausted on ourselves, & boats crew; at another time we would have exerted ourselves to save him, but we left him to his fate. Musk rats experience different vicissitudes as well as men, they must therefore exercise patience, as well as us!—

February 6th We embark'd at Plumb Island & steer'd West from the west end of Plumb creek³²⁰ 2 miles, Belle Isle bearing

³¹⁷ Modern Oyster Bayou.

³¹⁸ Probably on Four League Bay.

³¹⁹ Probably modern Creole Pass.

³²⁰ Apparently modern Plumb Island Pass.

from NNW to NW by N— 9 miles, & had from 8 to 9 feet water, but in the ship channel, between Point au Fer, & the mouth of the Atchafalaya, there is from 4 to 6 fathoms. On the Bar between

Thermometer 62°: 75°: 65°— Wind SE quarter Atchafalaya Bay— Point au Fer & Point Chevreuil, the only passage to the Gulf of Mexico from the Teche & Atchafalaya, there is from 6 to 9 feet

water, & some say 12 at high tides this may be so, but the best criterion is what we have seen—

The Schooner James Lawrence³²¹ drawing 6 feet water trades continually from New Orleans by the way of the Belize, through this channel; she carries 60 large Hogsheads of sugar in her hold & cotton upon deck, & goes as high up the Teche as New Iberia, higher no vessels larger than boats can go, until the river is clear'd of snags & fallen trees which impedes the passage.

Between Deer & Belle Islands, is the mouth of the Atchafalaya river, whose indraught & current, makes so heavy a swell, that it is very dangerous to cross it, we had a fresh gale in the SE quarter & run under the Jib & main sail, & ship'd a great deal of water, which nearly swmp'd us, the boat was so very deep; Between

Belle Isle and Bayou Deer & Belle Islands are two small hummocks of branch willow trees, the rest of the coast is low marsh; The Course to clear a point, which runs off Belle Isle³²² from SW to S is W & W by E, when small hummocks of trees appear to the Southwestward of said point, which makes the Island & divides it from the main by Bayou Belle Isle,³²³ on the NW side of the point of the Bayou, is a larger hummock bearing NNW, & a large hummock of live Oak, bearing NW with a low bank of white shells to the westward of it— will clear the point of Belle Isle in 5 & 6 fathom water, hard shelly bottom; the middle of the hummock³²⁴ on the land farthest to be seen towards Chevreuil point, must bear W 1/2 S, when your course through the entrance of the Bayou is NE, when you will have 5 feet water; & when off the Bank, will deepen in an instant to 4 fathom on the same course; the Bayou at its mouth is from 1/4 to 1/2 a mile wide;

³²¹ This schooner is mentioned several times later in the Journal. It appears to have been the most important, if not the only, such sailing vessel then plying regularly between points on lower Bayou Teche and New Orleans. Other schooners occasionally came to the Teche to load cargoes of cotton and sugar for the Atlantic seaboard ports, though the larger types of seagoing vessels probably drew too much water to permit them to enter the Teche. Steamboats had not yet been put into the service in the trade between the Teche and New Orleans in 1819.

³²² Modern Belle Isle Point.

³²³ This name is no longer used. See below, Belle Isle.

³²⁴ Probably Tucky Hammock.

Belle Isle is 4 miles distance³²⁵ bearing NW by N, to WNW, appears full of Live Oak trees margin'd with a white beach, & on both sides rounds out into the bay to the Northward,³²⁶ it is lined with very low marsh, cover'd with rank yellow grass.³²⁷ The first meander of the Bayou is from ESE to E, in 4 fathom [p. 45] the second is ENE in 7½ fathoms,³²⁸ the rest of the meanders I omit as they are of no real utility; from the mouth of the Bayou to within 50 yards of where timber grows, in all its meanders is only 1¼ miles the depth of water being from 1½ to 7½ fathoms—

Viewing the risks of the day, & finding that our boat was not sufficiently large to carry so many men, & provisions along the sea coast, to explore Chenier au Tigre, & to the Mermentau river, I requested the opinion of my Colleagues & of Lieu't Marchand the officer of the boat, who unanimously declared, that the boat was not trust worthy, & ought not to attempt the expedition; had we determined otherwise, I do not believe that the people or the pilot would— have went; as the latter inform'd them, that if we lost our boat, & even got safe onshore, we must inevitably perish, either by the hands of Indian hunters, pirates, or smugglers, which infest this coast.³²⁹ or from wild beasts, the Panther or Tiger, being numerous, that we could not cross the innumerable swamps & Bayous which intersect this Country, & would die of hunger, before we could get to any habitation, even if we escaped the other dangers which he had described to them; therefore after maturely weighing those disagreeable circumstances, we determined to return to the Teche, & to proceed to St Martinsville, & from thence endeavor to procure land carriage to the Vermillion, or Mermentau, before the season was too far advanced; & in order that our trouble & anxiety might in some measure be repaid, we proceeded up Myrtle wax Bayou, where we were inform'd there grew fine Live oak; leaving the small creek, we steerd up Bayou Belle Isle NNW, which from this creek inland,³³⁰ changes its name, in consequence of the great quantity of Myrtle (*Myrica indora*)³³¹ which grows on its banks; In 4½ miles the Courses were all round the Compass from ESE to WNW & in 6 miles, the Point of Belle Isle which we left, bore across the Marsh SSW dist.

³²⁵ Not from the mouth of the bayou.

³²⁶ Modern New Pass.

³²⁷ See footnote 288, above.

³²⁸ The present Big Wax and Poverty bayous.

³²⁹ Lower Louisiana west of the Teche was a lawless region in 1819; and Cathcart may have been plied with exaggerated reports of the dangers to be encountered there, by parties who for personal reasons did not relish a prospective visit of a government agent to that quarter.

³³⁰ Now Big Wax Bayou.

³³¹ See footnote 186, above.

2 miles, by which may be conjectured the windings of this labyrinth, & the futility of laying down every course & distance correct, where probably, no other officer of the United States, will enter for a century, especially as no Oak fit for any purpose grows in its whole extent; it is therefore sufficient to know, that it³³² runs from Belle Isle in a NE direction to where it runs into Berwick bay—its distance by its meanders, being 27 miles & in a straight line only 11, & has from 3 to 5 fathom water all the way through—It runs into Berwicks bay for 1 mile E to SE by E where Berwicks house bears NNE distance 3 miles; at 6 PM we enter'd the Atchafalaya, at 7½ passed Berwicks house, & at 8 arrived at Renthrops ferry, after a fatiguing days work, the people nearly exhausted, but content that we had changed our course from the Sea Coast.

[p. 46]

General Observations

The soil of Belle Isle is of the first quality, & the land is the highest in this section of the Country, its chief groth Live Oak, & Laurel magnolia³³³ underwood, shrubs & Canes, & several sorts of vines grow spontaneously I found an indigenous bean³³⁴ here which grows upon a vine & spreads a considerable distance which

Belle Isle is from 150 to 160 feet high in some places— I gave to Comodore Decatur who has planted it & says it comes up very well; its course appears from

the Bayou to run NE by N, & SW by S is 2 miles from E to W & 1½ from North to South & contains 1600 Acres which may produce between two & three live Oak trees per Acre, some of which are of the 1st class, but many are small, & probably it may not contain more than 2000 trees fit for naval purposes at present; it is said to abound in sulphur & has a mineral spring where invalids go to bath in summer,³³⁵ we were inform'd after our return to Franklin, that it likewise abounds in silver ore,³³⁶ we regret that we had not receiv'd this information before we went there, as we would have endeavour'd to ascertain the fact, although we do not place implicit confidence in the report; Its Quadrupeds are Bears, Tigers, Wild Cats, Racoons, & every other specie found

³³² Big Wax Bayou, Adam Cross, and Little Wax Bayou.

³³³ This is a common designation in the older publications for the common evergreen magnolia, *Magnolia grandiflora* L.

³³⁴ *Strophostyles helvola* (L.) Ell. is a common wild bean or trailing bean along the banks of the Mississippi River and may be the plant which Cathcart mentioned.

³³⁵ This is the first time the Editor of the *Quarterly* has encountered mention of a mineral spring thus early in this section of Louisiana. It must have been visited by residents of the immediate locality only.

³³⁶ Most certainly not true. Galena, a source of lead, which occurs in Louisiana salt domes, was probably mistaken for silver ore.

in its vicinity, & all the wild fowl naturel to this climate, on our landing we saw a large Snake, which is evidence of the existance of those reptiles in this beautiful spot, which if placed in an inhabited part of the world, would be worth 100 dollars per Acre, as it would not only produce all the necessaries of life in abundance, but many of the luxuries also; it is own'd by Dr Brussier³³⁷ of Kentucky, but his claim is disputed by Mess'rs Dauterieuze Dubucklet,³³⁸ Benoist de St Clair,³³⁹ & Francois Gonsoulin,³⁴⁰ under a Spanish grant of Governor Miro³⁴¹ dated 2nd of May 1783, a copy of the report of which may be seen in the Appendix A No. 34³⁴²—

Myrtle Wax Bayou does not contain any live oak what ever, fit for any naval purpose, & but a few shrubby trees of any sort;

Myrtle Wax Bayou its chief groth is myrtle, from whence it derives its name, on its margin are some Maple Sassafrass & Cypress trees, & is borderd with weeds resembling reeds, or wild oats, except in a few places where the Myrtle intermix'd with Dogwood—(*Cornus Florida*)³⁴³ hang over the water on both sides, & is beautifully picturesque, & would be consider'd an embellishment even to the most beautiful seats in Europe—The Quadrupeds, and feather'd tribe, are the same here

³³⁷ Dr. Walter Brashear later established an important sugar plantation there, and was long a prominent citizen of St. Mary Parish. In 1813 he owned this plantation without any slaves attached to it, and another plantation with eight slaves on Bayou Yockly in the same general locality. When the old New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad was completed from New Orleans to the Atchafalaya, a town was developed on the site of the former plantation. It was named Brashear City in honor of the owner of the land on which it was built; and Thomas Brashear, probably a son of the former owner, became the first mayor of the new town when it was incorporated in 1860. Later, when Charles Morgan purchased the railroad and established a line of steamboats between that point and Galveston, Texas, the name of the town was changed to Morgan City. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 834; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; Perrin, *Southwest Louisiana*, 221; Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, II, 182-183.)

³³⁸ Dautrieve (or Dauterive) Dubuclet was an old resident of the Attakapas country. He is doubtless the "Dubuche" (so spelled in the printed text) whom Governor Claiborne recommended to President Jefferson in 1804 as a suitable appointee as a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Orleans, and whom Claiborne described as a French planter of long and good standing in the country, said to be opulent, but who did not understand the English language. In 1816 Dubuclet, Benoit de St. Clair and Francois Gonsoulin laid claim to "an island called Belle Isle," which they claimed to have received as a grant from the Spanish government in 1784. In their petition to the United States government for confirmation of their title, it was stated that the island was "surrounded by trembling prairie or marsh, only fit for raising hogs, which the petitioners propose to engage in for the purpose of supplying the city of New Orleans with the article of pork." (Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX, 278, 281, 285; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 844; III, 119, 126.)

³³⁹ Benoit de St. Clair was another prominent early settler in the Attakapas district, and was also of French descent. He claimed large tracts of land in that section. See preceding footnote. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 869; III, 120, 126, 133, 173, 181, 188, 205, 209.)

³⁴⁰ Francois Gonsoulin was another prominent early French settler in the Attakapas district, who laid claim to large tracts of land. See footnote 338, above (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 842; III, 126, 173, 181, 188.)

³⁴¹ Esteban Miro was the Spanish Governor of Louisiana, 1783-1792.

³⁴² Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

³⁴³ It is doubtful if the flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida* L., grew along Myrtle Wax Bayou because it is generally absent from the flood plain of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers. The flood plains of these streams are too poorly drained for the flowering dogwood. The rough-leaved dogwood, *Cornus asperifolia* Michx., is abundant in this area.

as at Belle Isle, & on the Bayou we saw a female Alligator, who had a young one of about six inches long, siting on its tail, when on seeing us, it immediately abandon'd to its fate, & made towards the shore; was it possible to abhor those amphibious creatures [p. 47] worse than I do, this act of abandoning her offspring, would add to my detestation of the whole race—

Sunday 7th We rested here last night, where I observ'd that they put the blanketts on the bed, above the quilt, for what purpose, I know not, & *burn* their *candles* at the *wrong end*, putting the wick into the candlestick, & the thick end up, not to lose time in paring it, to fit the socket, or for motives of economy, and embark'd this morning & proceeded up the Teche. Between Renthrops, & McGows, or Muggahs,³⁴⁴ there is a ridge of tolerable good live Oak, which we had not seen before, the proprietors of which would be glad to permit any individual to take it away gratis, merely to clear their land, but if the United States were to order the purchase they would not fail to demand an exorbitant price for it probably from 3 to 7 dol's per tree, for patriotism is a plant which does not grow in this climate, & Uncle Sam is consider'd fair game!³⁴⁵

The first reach from Renthrops ferry up the Teche, runs SW, to SW by W, to the 1st bend of the river to South & round to SSW $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles round the point SW $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, round to North 3 miles; in all to Muggahs $7\frac{1}{4}$ miles where we dined, & arrived at Franklin at 8 PM, & took up our quarters at Reeds tavern,³⁴⁶ being very much fatigued, to avoid repetition, the courses and distances from Muggahs up to Franklin will be found when we again Course this river.

Monday 8th Remain'd at Franklin to refresh & to procure provisions for our next cruise; the wind had been at S & SE all day yesterday, last night a tempest commenced, accompanied with thunder lightning & torrents of rain which continued until 1 PM when it clear'd up—

Tuesday 9th We found great difficulty in procuring provisions for our people, some salt Thermometer 69° : 79° : 72° . Mackrel, & a piece of salt beef was reluctantly spared them by our host, who was very short of provisions himself³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ Near modern Patterson. See footnote 156, above.

³⁴⁵ Another of Cathcart's complaints about the exorbitant prices charged his party, and the lack of cooperation on the part of the residents of Attakapas.

³⁴⁶ See footnote 111, above.

³⁴⁷ The inhabitants of the Teche country apparently depended to a great extent upon provisions brought in from the outside. It is interesting to note the use of imported salt mackerel when the waters near them were full of fish to be had for the trouble of catching them.

Wednesd'y 10th A Southerly gale brought a cloud of Musquitos from the Sea marsh, which were very troublesome; the owners of Cattle demanding treble their value, we were obliged to threaten to shoot one to supply our necessities, this menace had the desired effect, and we bargain'd for one, for about 10% more than it was worth, this small imposition was put up with in preference to harsh measures as **Thermometer 59°, 72°, 70°—** we wish'd to avoid giving the inhabitants any cause for dissatisfaction, or room for complaint; No game of any sort is to be procured, neither poultry nor vegetables, not even a potatoe, & in consequence of the Mississippi rising so late this season, they had hardly sufficient salt provisions to supply their negroes,³⁴⁸ the flour which we now use, is so musty, that it is hardly eatable, & the Corn being ground in a large coffee mill very course, they make it into cakes husk and all, which they say is very healthy, it may be so, but it is very unpalatable—

[p. 48] *Thursday 11th* A storm arose at SW & shifted all round the compass, with thunder & lightning the sharpest I ever saw, at 10 PM the wind came round to the NW, & blew a perfect **Thermometer 61°, 72°, 65°** hurricane,³⁴⁹ which shook our **Wind SW Strong gales & rain NW, a Hurricane** house so much as to alarm us considerably; the rain fell in torrents until 3 AM when it moderated, & gradually subsided; We have had a most fortunate escape, for had we been at sea during this Tempest, we would inevitably have been lost, no deck'd vessel could have resisted its violence, much less a six oar'd open boat so deeply laden—

This evening we were under the disagreeable necessity of confining two of our crew (Steers, & Brown) in jail, for mutinous behaviour during intoxication; one of them threatend to cut the officers throat, it seems they had procured Taffia from the Negroes on the plantations in the vicinity, in barter for some of their cloathes³⁵⁰—

³⁴⁸ This statement indicates that salt meats were imported from the North, instead of the inhabitants killing their own livestock and curing the meat for domestic use.

³⁴⁹ Hurricanes do not occur at this season of the year in Louisiana.

³⁵⁰ Slaves on the plantations made a practice of stealing all sorts of articles which they bartered with unscrupulous whites for commodities which the slaves needed or desired. The appetite of Cathcart's crew for liquor was characteristic of the lower order of whites in those days, and even now.

Friday 12th Employ'd in bringing up our Journal³⁵¹ & in making extracts therefrom, which we sent to the Navy Commissioners on the 14 ins't overhauling Thermometer 64° , 62° , 68° . our boat & other necessary preparations

Saturday 13th Our boat being in tolerable good order, to expedite our passage up the Teche, we determined to row, as the

44° , 62° , 62° —

NW to NNE Fresh gales & very cold—

meanders of the river is so numerous that the sails would be of little use, we therefore unstep'd the masts & lighten'd the boat as much

as possible; the weather has been so very cold, that we have had fires lighted in the house, which induced us to release the prisoners, on their promising good behaviour, their insolence prevented their enlargement sooner.

Sunday 14th The gale continued, which prevented our departure, we therefore dedicated the day to the Lord of Hosts, as well as we could in this land of profligates, where even the appearance of religion, is ridiculed. A short time prior to our arrival, some well disposed people, prepared the school house³⁵² (there being no place of devotion of any description) between Lafourche & St Matinsville, to receive an itinerant preacher, who arrived at the town on a Saturday, & whom they wish'd to hear preach on the

Thermometer 50° , 67° , 65° — Wind East to SE fresh gales Sabbath, in the night, the rabble composed of the lower order of

Roman Catholics of french descent, who inherit all the bigotry, superstition, & intolerance, attendant on ignorance decorated the school house with horns & other emblems of derision which prevented the Minister from preaching the next day³⁵³ from which we may judge the state of society in this country—

Monday 15th Our Landlord procured us a Heifer, by special grace & 25 dollars, & shot & butcher'd her himself (so people live

³⁵¹ This and other similar expressions in the Journal reveal that Cathcart did not always keep his entries current, but that he often recorded his materials, apparently from rough notes, days after his observations were made.

³⁵² Schoolhouses were not common in the more primitive sections of Louisiana in 1819, and it is interesting to learn that such a public building existed on the Teche at that date. The American settlers in lower Louisiana were more interested in providing public school facilities than were the native Creoles, the latter element manifesting little interest in public schools for many decades longer, and preferring to leave educational matters to the Catholic Church.

³⁵³ Itinerant preachers or missionaries of the Baptist and Methodist denominations frequently made trips through the Attakapas region before 1819, but their reports of conditions there were not conducive to the establishment of organized churches until some years after that date.

in this country) which supplied us with provisions for our excursion. The cattle here run wild in the Prairies, & are so fond of

Thermometer 57°, 70°, 70° liberty, that the inhabitants say **Wind South'd & squally with rain.** they will not fatten in stalls, but I believe few have tried the experiment; each owner has a particular

mark, & when they want beef, they shoot and butcher [p. 49] them on the spot,³⁵⁴ & leave the offals to be devour'd by innumerable flocks of Cormorants, & Turkey buzzards, which perch on every tree; considering the health of the people, as well as our own, we purchased canvass & made an awning for the boat to shelter us from the sun & dew, which is very unhealthy.

Tuesday 16th Our departure having been considerably impeded by bad weather, as well as by the duties incumbent on us; we embark'd this morning, destined to the Vermillion & Mermentau if practicable, by the way of St. Martinsville, and steed as per margin; for the first three miles, the land on the N'th side is the

Thermometer 69°: 79°: 70° highest, when it changes & the **Wind South** S'th side is higher, as high up as

Fresh breezes with rain **NNW 1 1/4 N by E 1/2 to Ricos** **NE by E to ENE 2 1/4** **North 1/4** **N by W 11/2** **NW by N 1 1/4** **Richardsons,**³⁵⁵ the first plantation of any note; it may be worthy of remark that when the land increases in height on one side of the river, it invariably decreases on the other; the next plantation is **Finches**,³⁵⁶ then **Porter**³⁵⁷ &

³⁵⁴ The scarcity of salt for curing meat, and the difficulty of preserving it in that section of Louisiana, accounts for the consumption of the meat soon after the animal was slaughtered.

³⁵⁵ There were two Richardsons living on Bayou Teche in 1819, and it is difficult to know to which one Cathcart referred, although their plantations appear to have been only a mile or two apart. William Richardson was already settled on Bayou Teche in 1813, and at that time owned only three slaves, but he probably had greatly expanded his planting operations by 1819. A short time after 1813 John G. Richardson, a native of South Carolina, who had resided for a time in Wilkinson County, Mississippi Territory, removed to St. Mary Parish, Louisiana, and became a prominent sugar planter on Bayou Teche; and his son, Francis D. Richardson, who was born in Wilkinson County, Mississippi Territory, was for fifty years a sugar planter on Bayou Teche. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, II, 335.)

³⁵⁶ No such name as this appears in the list of planters on Bayou Teche for 1813 or for 1843; nor is there any other name that might have been confused with this by Cathcart. However, a man by that name may have established a plantation there before 1819 and died or moved away prior to 1843.

³⁵⁷ Alexander Porter, a native of Ireland, settled on Bayou Teche before 1812 and later developed a fine sugar plantation called "Oak Lawn". He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1811-1812, later a judge of the State Supreme Court, and twice a United States Senator from Louisiana. He died in 1844, and his brother James, who appears to have managed the plantation during Alexander's lifetime, inherited the estate and continued to operate it as a sugar plantation until his death in 1849. (W. H. Stephenson, *Alexander Porter, Whig Planter of Old Louisiana, passim*; *Planters' Banner*, February 17, April 6, 1848; March 29, 1849; P. A. Champomier, *Statement of Sugar Made in Louisiana in 1844*, 7.)

9 feet water
NW to WNW 3/4
W, WSW 1 1/2
SW to Lacy's 2 "
SW round 1 " to NW 2 "
North 1/2 "
N by E 1 "
North 1/4 "
to West 1/2 "
SW to the Indian bend 1 "
to Armenetts 1 1/2
WNW to W "
to Freres 1 "

Bakers,³⁵⁸ next Sterlings,³⁵⁹
Lacys,³⁶⁰ & Dr Hennings,³⁶¹ which
 is 14 miles by water from Franklin
 & only 4 by land, the next is
 Fusilers,³⁶² then his Son in laws,³⁶³
 next Madam Arminetz³⁶⁴ 20 1/2
 miles from Franklin, then
 Freres,³⁶⁵ next Poleraines,³⁶⁶ &
 then Moores³⁶⁷ where we encamp'd;
 here a Negro mistaking us for
 Pedlars, came to purchase rum, &
 finding his mistake, would not in-
 form us where his Masters house

³⁵⁸ See footnote 116, above. Joshua Baker removed from the Mississippi Territory to the Bayou Teche in 1811, and in 1813 he owned thirty-two slaves; and he had probably increased his holdings in slaves by 1819. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁵⁹ Alexander Sterling, an early American settler in the Feliciana District of West Florida, appears to have developed a plantation on Bayou Teche before his death. In 1813 the "Heirs of Sterling" owned a plantation on Bayou Teche with sixty-seven slaves; and in the same year Henry and Lewis Sterling owned a plantation and fifty-eight slaves in the same locality. Henry and Lewis were apparently sons of Alexander, and both were prominent citizens of St. Mary Parish for many years. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 468; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1820, p. 56.)

³⁶⁰ Jesse E. Lacy (or Lacey) purchased a plantation on Bayou Teche on February 23, 1806, and he had fourteen slaves on it in 1813. He later expanded his holdings and became one of the prominent planters and citizens of St. Mary Parish. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 161; III, 137-138; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁶¹ James Hennen owned a plantation on Bayou Teche in 1813, with eighteen slaves attached to it. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁶² Gabriel Fuselier de la Clair was the founder of the Fuselier family of Attakapas. After his death, Agricola Fuselier was the most prominent member of the family in the public affairs of that region. He owned land on Bayou Teche in 1813, but paid no taxes on slaves in St. Mary Parish in that year. However, he may have developed his plantation in that parish between 1813 and 1819. (Stanley Faye, "The Forked River," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXV, 938; Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX, 637, 699, 750; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1814, pp. 66-68; 1823, pp. 6-10; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 361, 840, 842, 850, 852; III, 174, 218; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁶³ The Editor has been unable to identify the son-in-law of Fuselier.

³⁶⁴ This appears to be another of Cathcart's phonetic spellings. In the margin he spells the name "Armenetts", while in the margin of the manuscript he spells it "Arminetz"; which would indicate that he was uncertain of the name. He appears to refer to Madam Desmaret, who claimed 1200 superficial arpents of land on Bayou Teche under an old grant; and on February 19, 1813, the United States government confirmed her title to this tract. In that same year Louis Demaret owned a plantation on Bayou Teche, to which twenty-six slaves were attached, and Martin Demaret owned one slave, probably on the same plantation. Elsewhere in the published documents this family name is spelled "Demarest", "Demarets", and "Demarests". (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 392, 813, 829, 840, 854, 867; III, 120, 127, 178; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁶⁵ In 1813 Alexander Frère owned a plantation on Bayou Teche with twenty-seven slaves. After his death his sons, Frederick Adrien and Joseph Alexander Frère, continued to develop the plantation, and by 1843 it was one of the largest sugar plantations in St. Mary Parish. (*Planters' Banner*, February 17, April 6, 1848; Champomier, *Statement of Sugar Made in Louisiana in 1844*, 7.)

³⁶⁶ This appears to be Cathcart's phonetic spelling of "Pellerin," the name of a prominent old family of Attakapas. In 1813 Frederick Pellerin owned a plantation with twenty-seven slaves on Bayou Teche, and Hubert Pellerin owned land and seven slaves in the same locality. Various members of the Pellerin family, of which Frederick was the most prominent member, claimed nearly 13,000 acres of land in the Attakapas region, some of which claims were confirmed and others rejected by the United States government. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 823, 825, 827, 840, 843, 854, 870; III, 92, 100, 104, 108, 109, 121, 148-149, 152, 155, 157, 179, 187, 190; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁶⁷ Near Adeline. Reference is probably to the plantation of John Moore, which he was developing in this period, although he had only two slaves on it in 1813. See footnote 140, above. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

W by N to Polerains 1 "
WNW to W by N 5
to where we Encamp'd
From Franklin 25½

behind the narrow ridges, are extensive Prairies, many of which were under the plough for the reception of Cotton seed, the chief staple of this country;³⁶⁸ There are but few Alligators on this river, great numbers of large Terrapins & some Catfish, there are likewise innumerable quantities of Carrion Crows & Black birds, some Owls, Cardineaux,³⁷⁰ & Paroquets, & a few ducks with beautiful plumage, call'd by the french Canard Branchus³⁷¹—

On our passage up we were overtaken by a storm, the Thunder & lightning very sharp & the rain fell in torrents, & did not entirely cease until we encamp'd at 5 PM, every thing in the boat was compleatly soak'd, & in addition to our sufferings we were pester'd with Musquitos & Gnats, we therefore commended ourselves to the holy spirit & waited anxiously for day—

1819

Wednesday 17th, Our Tents & beding being wet, when we encamp'd I was waken'd by a violent headache, which brought on an inflamation in my eyes & was very troublesome for some

Thermometer 52°, 63°, 52°
Wind Southerly with heavy
dew inclining to rain

weeks; at 7 AM we row'd up the Teche as per Courses, the land is low on which grew some scrub oak which is private property, the

principal groth all along the Teche, is Cypress, Gum, Maple, & Branch willow. We landed on ots Sorels plantation³⁷² to look at the only Pine tree in Attaccapas it is an exotic, about 12 feet high to the branches, & 18 inches diam'r At 10 AM we landed at

³⁶⁸ The Negro may have feared that the party would inform his master of his attempt to purchase rum from them, as slaves were punished severely for such conduct.

³⁶⁹ Now principally sugar cane; but only a few plantations on Bayou Teche were producing sugar in 1819. (*Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39.)

³⁷⁰ Cardinals.

³⁷¹ Reference to a bird now extinct in Louisiana.

³⁷² The Editor's guess is that Cathcart refers to the plantation of Joseph Sorrel, who had seventy-two slaves in 1813, one of the largest numbers owned in St. Mary Parish at that date. Contamin Sorrel also owned thirteen slaves and a plantation in 1813. Jacques Sorrel had settled on Bayou Teche in 1768, under a Spanish grant, and his son Joseph succeeded to the ownership of the plantation after his father's death. Contamin may have been the son of Joseph Sorrel. The family name is still preserved in the name of the village which has grown up on the old plantation. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 177, 183; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

Dr Thrustons,³⁷³ Judge Thrustons³⁷⁴ brother, he was not at home; his lady is a handsome woman of 17 formerly a miss Hudson,³⁷⁵ we saw his mother a venerable old matron, who [p. 50] said that Mr. Graham³⁷⁶ was the last to inform her of Judge Thrustons

³⁷³ Dr. Alfred Thruston was a son of the Rev. Charles Mynn Thruston, and Episcopal minister of Virginia who removed to Louisiana in 1808 and died in 1812. Dr. Thruston entered the United States Army as surgeon's mate of the Second Infantry, May 18, 1807, and was promoted to the rank of surgeon of the Seventh Infantry, December 12, 1808. He was stationed at New Orleans and at Fort Adams, Mississippi Territory; but he resigned from the Army on February 9, 1812—about the time of his father's death—and apparently went to reside with his family on Bayou Teche. In 1816 he was postmaster at Carlin's Settlement on the Teche, and in 1817 he was named as one of the six members of the Medical Board for the Western District of Louisiana, for "prescribing the formalities to be observed in order to obtain the right of practicing physic, or the profession of apothecary" in that section of the state. Nothing is known of his subsequent career, or the date of his death. (Francis B. Heitman, ed., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, I, 960; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1816-17, pp. 90-94; *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, I, 278, 291, 293, 295; *ibid.*, *Miscellaneous*, II, 358.)

³⁷⁴ Buckner Thruston, son of the Rev. Charles Mynn Thruston and brother of Dr. Alfred Thruston (see preceding footnote), was born near Winchester, Virginia, in 1763. He studied law and removed to Kentucky when a young man. In 1789 he represented Jefferson County (Kentucky) in the Virginia Legislature; and on December 19, 1791, he was appointed one of the first district judges in Kentucky. He was clerk of the Kentucky State Senate in 1798 and 1799, when the famous Kentucky Resolutions were adopted, and he served as a delegate from Fayette County to the Kentucky Constitutional Convention of 1799. In 1805 he was appointed United States District Judge for the Territory of Orleans, but he declined the appointment, and shortly thereafter he was elected to the United States Senate. However, he resigned from the Senate in 1809 to accept the appointment as United States Judge for the District of Columbia, which position he occupied until the date of his death, August 30, 1845. He was a personal friend and contemporary of Chief Justice John Marshall. (Collins and Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 351, 356, 360, 366, 405, 406, 509; *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, III, 515; *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, VI, 107.)

³⁷⁵ Probably a daughter of Francis Hudson who owned a plantation and ten slaves on Bayou Teche in 1813. However, there was also a John Hudson who owned a plantation and eight slaves on the lower Atchafalaya River in St. Mary Parish in 1813. Whether or not Francis and John were brothers is unknown to the Editor. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

³⁷⁶ A "Mrs. Thruston", doubtless the mother of Dr. Alfred and Judge Buckner Thruston, owned a plantation and thirty-eight slaves on Bayou Teche in 1813, and it seems likely that Dr. Alfred and the family of Frederick Conrad, who had married a daughter of the Rev. Charles Mynn Thruston, all lived together on the same plantation at that time. Or it may be that Frederick Conrad had not yet removed from Virginia to the Bayou Teche; he is not mentioned as a resident of St. Mary Parish in 1813. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

George Graham, formerly chief clerk in the War Department, at this time president of the Washington, D. C., branch of the United States Bank, and later (from 1823 to his death in 1830) Commissioner of the United States Land Office, was sent from Washington to Galveston, Texas, in 1818 to warn the Laffites to leave that post. He went to Galveston via Natchitoches, Louisiana, and Nacogdoches, Texas, but Cathcart's statement seems to establish the fact that he returned from Galveston via Bayou Teche. On his return Graham visited his friend Josiah Stoddard Johnson at his plantation on Bayou Rapides, twelve miles south of Alexandria, from which point he forwarded his report of the Galveston trip to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. He later purchased a half interest in the Johnston plantation, and after Johnston became United States Senator from Louisiana, Graham's son, George Mason Graham, was sent from Virginia to Louisiana as manager of the plantation. George Mason Graham became a prominent citizen of Rapides Parish, served as a militia general in the Mexican War, and was the first president of the Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy, now the Louisiana State University. (Walter Prichard, ed., "George Graham's Mission to Galveston in 1818" in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XX, 618-650, *passim*.)

From Franklin

Miles 25½

West to Sorrels 1½

WNW 1/2

NW 1½ to Provosts

WNW 2½ to here are

**8 plantations on the
left bank & two on the
right**

**8th plantation is Barrels
to Dr Thrustons on the right**

NW to W 3"

**To Oliviers which is the best
plantation on Tech on the
right or NE bank NW by W
4" To New Iberia on the
left Bank W by N 5 From
Franklin 43½**

plantations in its vicinity, the land is much higher and more

³⁷⁷ The Editor is uncertain as to the identity of this lady's husband. There was a William Weeks who claimed 800 arpents of land in Attakapas on Vermilion River under a Spanish grant. The claim was located on Grand Coté Island, and the claim was confirmed by the United States government, September 20, 1814. This may be the same William Weeks who received a grant of land in Feliciana in 1795, on which he apparently resided until his death, for his heirs later laid claim to the land. William Weeks, apparently the same man, also claimed land in Upper Louisiana (now Missouri). There was also a David Weeks, a Caleb Weeks, and a Thomas H. Weeks, all of whom claimed land in the West Florida district, the claims of the first named being in Feliciana. Apparently these former residents of Feliciana later removed to St. Mary Parish, for in 1843 the Estate of David Weeks was operating one sugar plantation and the firm of William F. Weeks & Company was operating another, both located on Grand Coté Island, which was the location of the Spanish claim of William Weeks, listed above. However, no individual by the name of Weeks paid taxes on land in St. Mary Parish in 1818; but it must be remembered that the claim of William Weeks to this tract was not confirmed until September 20, 1814. His family apparently removed to St. Mary after the confirmation of this grant. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 777, 801, 870; III, 51, 52, 54, 57, 58, 60, 61, 75, 332, 466; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

Another source states that John Weeks came to the Attakapas region "about 1812", bringing with him a number of slaves and becoming a prominent sugar planter. However, he was not yet in that section in 1813. It was apparently David Weeks, one of the Feliciana branch of the family, who married Mary C. Conrad, daughter of Frederick Conrad and granddaughter of Mrs. Thruston. This also appears to be the branch of the family after whom the modern Weeks Island was named. It is stated that John Weeks came from either Virginia or Maryland, but he may have been also one of the Feliciana Weeks clan, who had sojourned for a time there before removing to Attakapas. (Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, I, 548; Perrin, *Southwest Louisiana*, Part II, p. 135; *Planters' Banner*, February 17, April 6, 1848.)

³⁷⁸ A daughter of Frederick Conrad who had married Frances Thruston, daughter of Rev. Charles Mynn Thruston and sister of Dr. Alfred and Judge Buckner Thruston. This would make Mrs. Weeks and Mrs. Towles sisters of Charles Magill Conrad, later a member of both Houses of Congress from Louisiana and Secretary of War in Fillmore's cabinet; and of Frederick D. Conrad, a prominent lawyer and politician, who married into the Hickey family of East Baton Rouge. The Conrad family of Bayou Teche was also related by marriage to the Harding and Palfrey families of that section. Frederick Conrad removed from Virginia to Bayou Teche sometime between 1813 and 1819, where his wife's family had located prior to the former date. (Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, I, 548; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, I, 358; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848. See also footnotes 109, 373 and 374, above.)

³⁷⁹ John Towles, the wealthy planter previously mentioned (see footnote 109, above). One source states that Ann Conrad, a daughter of Frederick Conrad, married a Mr. "Tolwell", but this is evidently an incorrect spelling of the name. (*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, I, 358.)

³⁸⁰ No further identification of this tavern keeper is possible.

health. We saw Mrs Weeks³⁷⁷ her grand daughter, whose maiden name was Conrad,³⁷⁸ her sister is married to Dr. Towles,³⁷⁹ both about a month ago; they are both fine women & are eligibly settled; we proceeded up the Teche as per margin, & at 1h.15' PM arrived at New Iberia & put up at Pintards³⁸⁰ the only house of entertainment there & the best we have found since we left New Orleans; Mr. Pintard is a Frenchman of 70 years old, & Madam is a native of the Isle of Man. She was settled, or rather unsettled, in Philadelphia, where he married her. There are not more than six houses in Nova Iberia, but there are several good

rolling,³⁸¹ than at any other place between this & the Belize, & might be made a beautiful place, if its population was sufficient to afford the expense of making the improvements of which it is susceptible. At Pintards is kept the Collectors,³⁸² & Post Office,³⁸³ & the only store & Tavern between Franklin & St Martinsville—Mr Aborn³⁸⁴ the Deputy Collector is a worthy man, & a most diligent officer, a mighty hunter before the Lord, but unfortunately has lost one eye by the bite of a mosquito; he has captured several vessels smuggling, & laments very much, that he has not a small arm'd vessel at his command, of an easy draft of water, as he says he feels confident he could soon clear the coast of those rascals, & by their capture, in a short time, would indemnify the United States, for the expense of building & maning a vessel fit for this coast; probably these observations may be worthy of the attention of the Hon'ble Secretary of the Treasury³⁸⁵— In a conversation with Mr Aborn he inform'd us, that the vessels which he had seized were all sold, & if they had not, they could not be fited out here, but that Mr Terrill³⁸⁶ who lived upon the Vermillion, at the bridge,³⁸⁷ had a small Schooner which would answer our purpose, we therefore requested him to write to Mr Terrill upon the subject, & sent it overland by a Courier extraordinary, & directed him to bring his answer to us at St Martinsville, to where we intend to proceed in the morning³⁸⁸— (Vide) Mr Terrills Answer mark'd A No 12, in the Appendix³⁸⁹—

³⁸¹ On the edge of the first terrace.

³⁸² James Miller, a native of Maryland, was collector of the Teche district in 1819. His salary was \$1,400, although the total collections at that port for the year 1819 were only \$495.95. (*American State Papers, Finance*, III, 576; *ibid., Miscellaneous*, II, 318.)

³⁸³ The post office at New Iberia must have been established between 1816 and 1819, for there was no office there in the former year, the only post office on Bayou Teche below St. Martinsville being that at Carlin Settlement. By 1826 post offices had been established at New Iberia and Franklin, the latter being the name for the new town established at the old Carlin Settlement. (*American State Papers, Post Office Department*, 178; *ibid., Miscellaneous*, II, 376.)

³⁸⁴ Joseph Aborn was a United States surveyor in the Western District of Orleans Territory in 1810, and on July 7, 1813, he purchased land on Bayou Chicot in the Opelousas district. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 188, 183.) A man by the same name, listed as a native of Massachusetts, held a government contract in 1816 for transportation of the mails, at an annual compensation of \$1,680. This may be the same man who was deputy collector at New Iberia in 1819, as the amount of his compensation would indicate that his mail route was located in a remote section of the country; however, the location of his mail route is not given in the records. (*ibid., Miscellaneous*, II, 392.)

³⁸⁵ Not only were smugglers in lower Louisiana defrauding the United States by evasion of the customs regulations, but pirates in the Gulf of Mexico were also preying upon legitimate commerce at this date. On March 6, 1819, almost contemporaneous with the complaint of Cathcart, the Louisiana Legislature adopted the following joint resolution: "Resolved, That the Governor of this State be required to solicit from the President of the United States, to order that a sufficient Naval force be stationed on our coasts, to protect them against the depredations of the Pirates which desolate them, and which impede our communications with Vera Cruz, and other Spanish ports in the Gulph of Mexico." (*Laws of Louisiana*, 1819, p. 134.)

³⁸⁶ Abel Terrill. See correspondence with him in Appendix to this Journal. No further information on him has been found.

³⁸⁷ Probably at the point on Vermilion River, three miles south of modern Abbeville, still called "Perry's Bridge". This became the first parish seat of Vermilion Parish when it was created in 1844; but in 1852 Abbeville became the parish seat. (*Perrin, Southwest Louisiana*, 254-256.)

³⁸⁸ In this paragraph Cathcart is naming the right and left banks as they appear on ascending the Teche. This is contrary to modern procedure.

³⁸⁹ Reference is to appendix to the Journal.

Thursday 18th Having obtain'd every possible information from Mr Aborn & others, we embark'd, and steer'd up the Teche, for St Martinsville, & soon after met two canoes with a large family of Indians in them Viz: 4 women one of whom was half white, as many men & several children, besides a large dog couchant in the bow, & their baggage, one white man would have overturn'd either of those canoes if not extremely careful—The

**Thermometer 48°, 73°, 58°
Wind Westerly**

land on the right side of the river is in some places 12 feet above its level, declining to extensive prairies

in its rear, a little above the first plantation [p. 51] on the left bank is a large Brick kiln (for this country) the bricks are pale but pretty good.³⁹⁰ On the margin there are a few good live oaks dispersed on private property, & some Hickory (*Juglans aquatica*)³⁹¹ but the chief groth is the same as on other parts of the Teche The river up from Nova Iberia or Newtown, is full of

**From Renthrops
miles to Franklin 25
to New Iberia 43
to St Martinsville 24**

**From Rents 92 to
St Martinsville
Courses—**

**NW to NE 3/4
to East 1"
to ENE 1/2 "
12 ft. water
East 3/4 "
to NE by E 1 1/4
to E by S 3/4 "
to E by N 1 1/4
to NNW 2 1/4
to NNW 1/2 W 3/4**

snags & trees which have fallen from both banks nearly across the river & impedes the passage, many hang by a few fibres of their roots, which renders it both dangerous & intricate, but when the Steam boat³⁹² commences to navigate this stream (for the building of which a considerable sum is already subscribed) those impediments must be removed before she can come up to the Town where there is 10 feet water, & not less than 9 feet all the way up—Between New Iberia & St Martinsville are 17 Plantations on the right bank, & 11 on the left, some of which are very large, but the

³⁹⁰It is interesting to note that there was a brickkiln on the Teche in 1819.

³⁹¹ Now *Hicoria aquatica* (Michx. f.) Britton.

³⁹² Cathcart apparently had learned of the organization of the "Attakapas Steam Company" which was then seeking a charter for the operation of steamboats from the Teche and Vermilion bayous to the Mississippi River. The act chartering this company was approved on February 26, 1819, with William L. Brant, John Duhamel, Alexander Porter, Jr., Thomas B. Brashear, Willis J. Powell, Octave Delahoussaye, John Muggah, Merial, Jacob Clements, Peltier Delahoussaye, William Armstrong, and William Gregg as incorporators. (*Laws of Louisiana, 1819*, pp. 32-34.)

The Teche from New Iberia greatest number are 5 Arpents is 30 yds wide to St. Martins'e cotton of last years groth, baled up very neatly in bales of from 3 to 400 lbs each³⁹⁴—

Nine miles from the Church,³⁹⁵ there are several plantations close together which has the appearance of a town, some were newly clear'd, & others had some small Peach trees on them in blossom; at Peltiers³⁹⁶ 5 miles below the Church at the narrowest

part of the river where several Flats³⁹⁷ waiting to load cotton for New Orleans, they carry from 100 to 150 bales of from 3 to 400 lbs each—At 6 PM we arrived at St Martinsville (alias) the Church, & put up at Gregs tavern,³⁹⁸ which is not near as commodious as Pintards, the rain entering in every direction; Greg & his wife are both scotch, of which there are a considerable number of the lower order in this town;³⁹⁹ he is by trade a Gardiner & they both seem to be good industrious people of their class, are very obliging, & know very well how to charge for

North 1 "
N by E 1 "
To Reinforts Plantation
SW, to 1st Plantation
on the left side 2 "
10 feet water
S by E 1/2 E 3/4
SSW to W, 1 "
W by N, to Octaves
Plant'on 1 "
9 ft. water
NW to Peltiers 2 1/2
NW, NW by N NW by W 1 "
N'th Easterly to
St Martins'e 4 1/2
From New Iberia 24

their civility, indeed this is an art that no person is ignorant of in this vicinity.

On our passage up we caught a large Terrapin, which was asleep on a log, that would weigh at least 12 lbs, this river abounds

³⁹³ The land immediately on the banks of the watercourses of lower Louisiana is higher than that in the rear; and the waterways were the chief arteries of transportation in early days. Hence, each settler desired a frontage on the river or bayou. The French and Spanish governments therefore made grants with relatively narrow frontages on watercourses and running back forty arpents, or nearly a mile and a half.

³⁹⁴ In early days the cotton presses were incapable of compressing the cotton so compactly as in later times; hence the lighter weight of the early bales, as compared with the modern bales of approximately 500 pounds each.

³⁹⁵ The old Attakapas Church of St. Martin, about which grew up the old Attakapas Post now called St. Martinsville.

³⁹⁶ Pelletier was an old French family of the Attakapas district.

³⁹⁷ Flatboats were the principal means of transporting cotton from Bayou Teche to the New Orleans market in those days. Steamboats were not yet in service on the Teche, and schooners appear to have been unable to navigate that high up the Teche.

³⁹⁸ Probably operated by William Gregg, one of the incorporators of the Attakapas Steam Company. (See footnote 392, above.)

³⁹⁹ The commonly accepted view is that St. Martinsville was almost exclusively a French community. It is therefore interesting to note that Cathcart found a large number of Scots, "of the lower order," residing there in 1819.

with them, but they are very shy, from the landing to the Tavern we had to walk a quarter of a mile through the mud, as it had rain'd during the day which was very disagreeable—

Friday 19th This day the Gale which commen'd yesterday at 8 PM continued until 4 PM, part of the time the wind flew all round the compass, & resembled a hurricane,⁴⁰⁰ with heavy rain, which Thermometer 62° : 64½° ; 67° render'd the streets impassible, & tremendous thunder & lightning, but the height of the gale was from NW to NE—Having found the impracticability of

carrying our boat overland, & the Courier returning with Mr Terrills answer, in the negative (vide) A No 12, in the Appendix;⁴⁰¹ & taking into serious consideration the many unfavorable circumstances, which prevented our further procedure on this rout, I wrote a letter to Mess'rs [p. 52] Hutton & Landreth⁴⁰² stating the difficulties which occur'd (vide) Appendix A No 13,⁴⁰³ they were unanimous in opinion, that we could not execute our first plan without incurring a vast expense, which the object we had in view would by no means justify, especially as the result was uncertain, & as we had faild to procure a vessel fit for the service, we determined to return to New Orleans to procure one, or to pursue our inspection on Lakes Pontchartrain, Maurepas, & Borgne, as circumstances might dictate, & made preparations accordingly—

St Martinsville in the parish of St Martins, County of Attakapas,⁴⁰⁴ contains about 100 houses, & probably between 6 & 700 inhabitants, it has a Gothic built church, Jail & Courthouse, like-

St Martinsville wise an apology for a Ballroom;⁴⁰⁵ some of the description of wealthy live decently, but that is by no means general; Some few houses are in part built of brick,⁴⁰⁶ but mostly of Mud, & many of the old wealthy inhabitants

⁴⁰⁰ That is, a cyclonic front.

⁴⁰¹ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁴⁰² James Hutton and John Landreth, the former co-agent with Cathcart and the latter surveyor for the agents.

⁴⁰³ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁴⁰⁴ St. Martinsville had been the county seat of the County of Attakapas until 1811, when the county was divided into the two parishes of St. Martin and St. Mary. Since that date it has been the parish seat of St. Martin, while Franklin has been the parish seat of St. Mary.

⁴⁰⁵ The French town of St. Martinsville was the center of social life in that section. The inhabitants were fond of dances and balls of all sorts, and it is interesting to note that there was a sort of public ballroom in the town as early as 1819.

⁴⁰⁶ Cathcart probably refers to the type of construction called by the French "briques entre poteaux" (bricked between posts), a wooden frame being first erected and then filled in with bricks. Houses of this type are still in use in some sections of French Louisiana.

retain their original shed, with very little improvement to cover them⁴⁰⁷—

The houses which are built of Mud,⁴⁰⁸ is mix'd with moss, with which every tree is nearly cover'd, it is put up by hand, without the use of the trowel, on shelves places [sic] from one frame to the other, & becomes very hard & strong, when thoroughly dry, some plaster over, some white wash⁴⁰⁹ only, & the poorer class leave them in their original state, owing to the scarcity of lime, their only resource being to bring clam shells from the Lakes, or Oister shells from the Sea shore to make it of;⁴¹⁰ their doors & joiners work are done in the crudest manner,⁴¹¹ & few houses of the last description have any glass in their windows, in the whole extent of this country which we have visited, neither is there a single stone of any description, from the Belize to this place but what is brought here from other places⁴¹²—Here is a bridge which extends across the river,⁴¹³ very much out of repair, above which it is only navigable for Flats & canoes, which go up nearly to its source in the Opelousas, when the river is at its highest, which entirely depends upon the rise of the water in the Mississippi—

The head of Vermillion bay is about 17 miles West of this place where the Bayou or river⁴¹⁴ empties into—Forty three miles

Vermillion Bay

Mermentau

**Calcasou & Sabine,
all of which are infested
by Pirates & Smugglers**

West of this, the Mermentau is intersected by the common path,⁴¹⁵ which cannot be calld a road, having no defined boundary, but runing through the middle of an extensive Prairie, in which the angles of Vision intercept the prospect; farther West, is the Calcasou, & Sabine, & all of them are infested by bands of Pirates who wear any flag that suits

⁴⁰⁷ The Anglo-Saxon element in the population of the Attakapas region led in the construction of commodious houses at a later period. The French population seemed less interested in fine homes, although there were a few exceptions to this general rule.

⁴⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that the tradition of log houses was unknown in that section of Louisiana.

⁴⁰⁹ Houses thus constructed are still to be found in the French sections of Louisiana.

⁴¹⁰ Shells long remained the principal source of lime in that region.

⁴¹¹ Skilled house carpenters and jointers were scarce in those days in all remote sections of the country.

⁴¹² The Teche region was alluvial land, hence the absence of stones. The stone used in New Orleans at a later period for paving streets, sidewalks and courtyards was brought in as ballast in ships coming from Atlantic seaboard or European ports for cargoes of cotton and sugar.

⁴¹³ The banks of Bayou Teche were low, and a bridge would impede navigation on the bayou. Drawbridges were expensive to build and maintain; hence ferries, which did not impede navigation, were much more common than bridges on the watercourses of lower Louisiana.

⁴¹⁴ Vermilion River at present.

⁴¹⁵ Reference is probably to the old Spanish Trail which crossed the prairies from St. Martinsville to the Spanish territory beyond the Sabine River.

them, but denominate themselves Patriots.⁴¹⁶ These sanguinary wretches capture all they meet, & although the objects of their wrath may have but little to lose, that little they invariably take, & to obviate detection, by indubitable proof being adduced against them, they are destroy'd without respect to age, sex, or situation; that these crimes, in an inhabited part [p. 53] of our country should be committed, is not perhaps very astonishing, but that they should be increased instead of diminish'd, can only be accounted for by admiting, that the cupidity of the inhabitants, is a more powerful passion than humanity, & it is here necessary to observe, that the articles of commerce, thus extorted by acts of unheard of barbarity, are secretly brought into the Country through the rivers & Bayous, and purchased at reduced prices, & the revenue is thus defrauded & the fair trader injured most essentially⁴¹⁷—

Though the inhabitants are not numerous, they are yet sufficiently so, to restrain this nefarious commerce in some degree, & yet shame to humanity, & particularly to Americans, no exertions are made to that effect, but on the contrary, they participate in the guilt & encourage the practice by purchasing the plunder from those marauders at their own prices⁴¹⁸—

We are persuaded that the general government have never yet been made acquainted with these circumstances to their full extent, & feel convinced that when they are, effectual measures will be pursued to prevent their continuation, especially as the means necessary to be employ'd are in themselves trifling—One small Cutter or Schooner drawing 5½ feet water, mounting 4 Caronades & 16 men with small arms, would be sufficient to clear all those Bayous & Rivers of these Pirates, while the vessels of War on this station would give a good account of them in the offing, but draw too much water to pursue them along shore⁴¹⁹—

⁴¹⁶ The name assumed by the party in the Spanish colonies, which was struggling for independence from the mother country. Under cover of this name many outrages were perpetrated, and the term "Patriot" covered a multitude of sins on the lower Louisiana coast in those days.

⁴¹⁷ Residents of the Attakapas country could procure from smugglers slaves and many other needed commodities, at prices far below those prevailing in the legitimate market. Hence it was to their pecuniary advantage to purchase from the smugglers in preference to the legitimate merchants. The duties thus lost to the government in this process impressed upright men like Cathcart.

⁴¹⁸ Vigilance of customs officers made it next to impossible for the smugglers to dispose of their loot in New Orleans in 1819. Their only remaining outlet for such loot was the inhabitants of the sparsely settled Attakapas region, and the purchasers were able in most cases to set the prices for such goods.

⁴¹⁹ At this very time the Louisiana Legislature was appealing to the President of the United States (James Monroe) to do just what Cathcart was recommending. Ordinary warships could not safely navigate the shallow waters off the Louisiana coast, and the smaller vessels employed by the smugglers and pirates were thus able to elude capture. See footnote 385, above.

Saturday 20th Remain'd to refresh the people, dry the Tents Thermometer 61° , 68° , 65° . & baggage, overhaul the boat, & other necessary jobs, likewise to procure correct information. Mr Brent⁴²⁰ & Palfry⁴²¹ to whom we had letters were both absent

Sunday 21st Embark'd at 7 AM & proceeded to Nova Iberia 46° , 75° , 60° where we arrived at 3h.15' PM, 24 miles, & took up our old quarters at Pintards—

Monday 22 Departed from Pintards at 3h.30' AM & arrived Thermometer 32° , 39° , 72° , 60° at Reeds Tavern at Franklin at 5h.30' PM having row'd all the way with the tide 9 hours in our favour & 4 against us—

Tuesday 23rd Remain'd at Franklin to rest the people, & to Thermometer 58° : 72° : 65° provide provisions for the next trip, Wind Southerly with rain where we found Musquitos in abundance the prairies being cover'd with them in consequence of the prevalence of South & SE winds, this is unusual at this season of the year the inhabitants say that it indicates a sickly season⁴²²—

Wednesday 24th Much diversity of opinion existing relative to the existance of live oak on Bayous Salé & Robert, made a communication to Mr Hutton⁴²³ recommending an excursion to Thermometer 58° , 70° , 65° — those places, in order that we Southerly fresh gales might be enabled to reconcile so many contradictory reports & judge for ourselves, employ'd procuring horses, provisions, etc— (Vide) A No 14 in the Appendix⁴²⁴—

[p. 54] *Thursday 25th* Mess'r's Hutton & Landreth, having porcured horses, departed to explore Bayous Salé & Robert,⁴²⁵ I remained at Franklin to make arrangements for our return to New Orleans, & to take medicine, my eyes being much inflamed—

⁴²⁰ William L. Brent. See footnote 142, above.

⁴²¹ John Palfrey, a native of Boston, came to New Orleans in 1804 and established himself as a merchant. About a decade later he removed to St. Martin Parish, where he developed an important sugar plantation. He represented St. Martin Parish in the Legislature, 1820-1822. He died on his plantation in 1843. (Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, IX, 290, 337; *Louisiana House Journal*, 1820-21, p. 8; 1822, p. 9; *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 169-170; *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, VII, 199.)

⁴²² The inhabitants were probably right, as the southerly winds would tend to impede the flow of the waters, thus causing many stagnant pools to develop as breeding places for mosquitoes.

⁴²³ James Hutton, the other agent accompanying Cathcart. See Appendix to this Journal.

⁴²⁴ Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

⁴²⁵ Bayou Salé is still so called; Bayou Robert is probably the modern Leopard Bayou.

In a conversation with Mr Christie Bryant,⁴²⁶ one of the proprietors of Bryant's, or Tiger Island⁴²⁷ he infrom'd me, that a considerable part of the Island, on which grows some fine Live Oak, Thermometer 60°, 72°, 63°. Lemuel Paris,⁴²⁸ who has given his name to the Island⁴²⁹ on which he resides is what is here calld a squatter,⁴³⁰ & has no claim to it whatever except of preemption for having settled on it; & that the greatest number of those settled on the other Islands in its vicinity have no better right to the lands they claim; That he was with Capt'n Newcomb⁴³¹ in the revenue cutter in 1807, & had often heard him say, that there was a circuitous channel,⁴³² over the bar between Points au Fer & Chevreuil, to the mouth of the Atchafalaia in which at high water is from 11 to 12 feet water; that many people who had live Oak on their plantations, would be glad to give it for the taking away, some of which was near transportation by water carriage; That between the Islands & the main, from Point Chevreuil, to Chenier au Tiger, as well as at the outside of them, there are very dangerous Oister banks, that were we to lose our boat, & even get onshore afterwards, death would inevitably ensue, as the Marshes & Bayous would prevent a passage to any inhabited place on the main, even abreast of the Islands, & that from Chenier au Tigre, to the mouth of the MermenTau, there was no inhabitants whatever & the coast is entirely open to the heave of the sea from the Gulf of Mexico, which occasions a considerable surf on the shore continually, which renders landing almost impossible in the finest weather; this corresponds with our Pilots—(Mr Ballew's)⁴³³ account, & is confirm'd by our own observation—

That from Tigre or Bryants Island, to Belle Isle is 10 leagues & from the mouth of the Atchafalaia to Point au Fer, is between

⁴²⁶ The name by which Christopher O'Brian, Jr., was commonly called. See footnotes 239 and 245, above.

⁴²⁷ Site of modern Morgan City.

⁴²⁸ No further information than that given by Cathcart is available on this individual. If his character was correctly represented by Cathcart, dearth of information on him is not surprising.

⁴²⁹ Now Beers Island, below Bryant's or Tiger Island.

⁴³⁰ Squatters were numerous in the Attakapas region in 1819.

⁴³¹ Reference is probably to Henry S. Newcomb who was commissioned as a lieutenant in the United States Navy on July 24, 1813. He had doubtless served many years in the Navy prior to receipt of his commission as lieutenant. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 301, 347.)

⁴³² Probably that appearing on the coast chart for 1895.

⁴³³ Page Ballew, who had served Cathcart's party as pilot in the earlier part of their survey. See footnote 159, above.

7 & 8 leagues, which as well as Point Chevreuil, is low marsh, the distance from Belle Isle to which, is 11 or 12 miles, which corresponds with our observations—

Friday 26th I endeavour'd to charter the Schooner James Lawrence⁴³⁴ to take us to Chenier au Tigre & the MermenTau, Thermometer 62°, 75°, 60° without success (vide) my letter to Mr Hutton on the subject in the Appendix A No 15—

Mr Bryant in company with Major Moore⁴³⁵ inform'd me that Lemuel Paris had inform'd him, that he had discover'd a vein of Silver Ore said to be found silver⁴³⁶ mine on high land (supposed to be on Belle Isle) as there is no other high land in this district, that he had seen the metal produced from the ore, that it was malleable & had the appearance of [p. 55] silver & promised to send me a sample of the metal & ore to Washington as well as of the sulphur⁴³⁷ & mineral water; there is no doubt of the existance of the latter, as a number of gentlemen confirms the report, & many saw the bank on fire several years ago, Mr Hutton has seen Sulphur found on Belle Isle the Brimstone said to be produced there, which has the appearance of lava, & annually a number of invalides repair there to bath in the spring;⁴³⁸ We lament very much that we did not know those circumstances prior to our being there, as it prevented us from endeavouring to ascertain the fact.

Saturday 27th Before Meridian Mess'rs Hutton & Landreth return'd from exploring Bayous Salé & Robert, & reports, that at 11 AM on the 25th ins't they arrived at Mr George Roysters⁴³⁹ plantation 7 miles SW westerly from Franklin, & was hospitably receiv'd & he promised to be their guide if they would wait until the morning for fair weather; accordingly on Friday the 26th they proceeded down the Bayou, which is nothing more than a winding gully⁴⁴⁰ 15 feet wide, & from 12 to 18 inches deep fill'd with Cypress knees,⁴⁴¹ which are exressences from the roots of the trees, which rise vertically through the earth, sometimes 40

⁴³⁴ See footnote 321, above.

⁴³⁵ See footnote 140, above

⁴³⁶ Probably galena, a source of lead, which occurs in Louisiana salt domes.

⁴³⁷ Cathcart's information as to the presence of sulphur in the Attakapas region is correct.

⁴³⁸ See footnote 335, above.

⁴³⁹ In 1813 this man owned a plantation and eight slaves, located on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

⁴⁴⁰ This is true only of the upper few miles of the bayou.

⁴⁴¹ The discussion of the cypress knees and the virtues of the wood in preventing silver from tarnishing is not in Cathcart's usual style of commentary.

feet from the tree to which the parent radix belongs; they are an uncommon production peculiar to the Cypress, their figure is conical from 1 to 3 inches at the base, & from 1 to 3 feet in height here, but in other places much larger, the summit in all seasons is very tender, & appears always ready to bud, although that never takes place, the bark may be peel'd from it with the nail, & beneath it is perfectly green, notwithstanding the trunk

Thermometer 60°, 73°, 63°.

Wind S to SW cloudy with rain at midnight a heavy gale commenced at NW to North with thunder & light'g & torrents of rain which lasted all night—

Bayou Salé Bayou Robert—

& boxes common in Turkey & the Barbary States;⁴⁴³ There is another species, *Cypresses thyoides*,⁴⁴⁴ which is more durable than the Cypress of the North, it is not so large & produces cones of a reddish purple colour when ripe, but in other respects is similar to the white species of this country—On the way they discover'd only four or five live oak trees, of a moderate size, which confirm'd them in opinion, that the people of this country, have determined jointly, never to tell the same story, & seldom the truth to any one; they arrived at Mr Roberts⁴⁴⁵ residence, who inform'd them that Bayou Robert lay at the back of his plantation, 5 Arpents from his house, that he had cut a canal from one Bayou to the other, that Bayou Robert runs in many crooked meanders into the Lake of Belle Isle, & is from 8 to 10 feet deep; Bayou Salé runs through a Peninsula of arable land, not above 5 Arpents wide, in a most circuitous, & serpentine course, from half a mile East of Mr Roysters for 26 miles, & empties itself into the Bay of St Bernard.

⁴⁴² Reference is to John Bartram, *A Description of East-Florida, with a Journal, Kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia, Botanist to His Majesty for the Floridas . . .* (London, 1769), or to William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida . . .* (Philadelphia, 1791). William was the son of John; both were noted botanists. (*Dictionary of American Biography*, II, 26-29.)

⁴⁴³ Cathcart's long residence in the Mediterranean area had made him familiar with conditions in Turkey and the Barbary States.

⁴⁴⁴ Now *Chamaecyparis thyoides* (L.) B.S.P. It has not been possible to confirm old reports on the presence of this species in Louisiana. If it occurs in the State, one might expect to find it in the Pearl River district since it is present on the Mississippi side of this stream.

⁴⁴⁵ Peter Roberts owned a plantation with eighteen slaves on Bayou Salé in 1813, and "P. & W. Roberts" (probably Peter and his son) owned another plantation with six slaves in the same locality. Abraham Roberts had settled at Cote Blanche in 1782. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 121, 149.)

itself may be dead; the Tree itself when in perfection merits the description given it by Bartram,⁴⁴² & others—Cypresses disticha, is a species peculiar to this country, being destitute of the aromatic odour, & not possessing the quality to tarnish gold, & silver, like that

of the East, when made int^o chests

& boxes common in Turkey & the Barbary States;⁴⁴³ There is

another species, *Cypresses thyoides*,⁴⁴⁴ which is more durable

than the Cypress of the North, it is not so large & produces cones

of a reddish purple colour when ripe, but in other respects is

similar to the white species of this country—On the way they

discover'd only four or five live oak trees, of a moderate size,

which confirm'd them in opinion, that the people of this country,

have determined jointly, never to tell the same story, & seldom

the truth to any one; they arrived at Mr Roberts⁴⁴⁵ residence,

who inform'd them that Bayou Robert lay at the back of his

plantation, 5 Arpents from his house, that he had cut a canal

from one Bayou to the other, that Bayou Robert runs in many

crooked meanders into the Lake of Belle Isle, & is from 8 to 10

feet deep; Bayou Salé runs through a Peninsula of arable land,

not above 5 Arpents wide, in a most circuitous, & serpentine

course, from half a mile East of Mr Roysters for 26 miles, &

empties itself into the Bay of St Bernard.

[p. 56] They proceeded to within six miles of the mouth of the Bayou,⁴⁴⁶ where the groth of live oak entirely ceased,⁴⁴⁷ & found that on its whole extent, both on public & private lands, there was not more than would suffice to build one small vessel, by hauling it four miles to water carriage we therefore conclude that it is unworthy the attention of Govern't notwithstanding the exaggerated accounts the people at Franklin & elsewhere gave of it, they therefore retraced their steps; themselves, & their horses, half devour'd by musquitos—

Has pass'd through several hands; latterly a Mr Johnson⁴⁴⁸ purchased it for 500 dollars, Mr Bruissier⁴⁴⁹ who lives in Bairds-
Belle Isle town between Franklin & Dansville in the State of Kentucky purchased it from him, for a Negro man, although it is claim'd by three frenchmen⁴⁵⁰ under a grant of the Spanish Governor Miro, dated May 2nd 1803⁴⁵¹ (see) the report of said claim in the Appendix A 35.⁴⁵²

Bruissiers claim which is supposed to be good, is founded on actual purchase, from the occupier, who had form'd a small settlement, which he has since abandon'd, it is highly probable that he would exchange it with government for land in another section of the Country if so I presume it would be advisable to secure it, as it contains at least 2000 fine live oak trees, & may be converted into a forest of that timber, which would be a valuable acquisition for the use of our Navy hereafter, when that valuable timber becomes scarce, & from its situation, it may remain a century in perfect security; the land in the highest part is 160 feet above the level of the water & is well calculated for either a sugar plantation or a Vineyard—⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁶ They missed the well known Bayou Salé woods by not going to the mouth, so the criticism of the local inhabitants may not be warranted.

⁴⁴⁷ Although man has destroyed much of the original vegetation along the bayou banks, there is near the mouth of the bayou a good stand of large live oaks.

⁴⁴⁸ John Johnson settled in this area about 1800, but was accidentally killed in 1801. and his son Patrick Johnson, individually and as guardian for a minor, William Johnson, later laid claim to the same tract. This must be the family to whom Cathcart refers. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 120, 135, 136.)

⁴⁴⁹ Dr. Walter Brashear owned Belle Isle in 1813, but had no slaves on it and apparently was not yet developing it. See footnote 337, above. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

⁴⁵⁰ Dauterive Dubuclet, Benoit de St. Clair, and Francois Gonsoulin. See footnote 338, above.

⁴⁵¹ This date is erroneous. Esteban Miro was governor of Spanish Louisiana from 1783 to 1792.

⁴⁵² Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

⁴⁵³ Cathcart was well acquainted with the type of soil on which European vineyards were located, and about the time he was writing several projects for the establishment of vineyards in different sections of the United States were in progress. Sugar plantations were relatively few on Bayou Teche in 1819, but the cane was a very profitable crop where grown.

Lemuel Paris the occupier of the Island which bears his name, was tried for Horse stealing in Kentucky, the fact proved **Parises Island** against him, & would have been condemn'd (my informant says) had not Alex'r Marshall,⁴⁵⁴ (chief justice John Marshalls brother) found a flaw in the indictment by which he escaped—

Terrill⁴⁵⁵ who lives on the Vermillion from whom we attempted to charter a schooner without success, which is generally believ'd he employs in smuggling goods, which he purchases from the (soi dissant) Patriots of Galvestown,⁴⁵⁶ although her ostensible employment is in bringing salt from the Sabine; & Little Parises⁴⁵⁷ brother in law, came to Franklin, some time ago to purchase pewter, & particularly ask'd for the pewter worms of worn out stills; about the same time a number of base dollars was found in circulation, & it is generally believ'd here, that Paris coin'd them, & that they pass'd them, but there was not sufficient proof found to accuse them of the fact⁴⁵⁸—I presume that this Island, on which there is some good live oak, is worthy the attention [p. 57] of Government, as well as that part of Tiger Island which belongs to the United States before mention'd, which likewise contains some fine timber—

Boles⁴⁵⁹ claims one mile square in LaFourche Island,⁴⁶⁰ but by what title is not known, the rest of the Island has many **La Fourche Island** settlers on it, supposed to have no original right whatever, & have only acquired the right of pre-emption as settlers—

It is claim'd by Rice;⁴⁶¹ but it is not known by what title, **Cowpen Island** & is likewise worthy the investigation of Government—

⁴⁵⁴ Alexander Keith Marshall, son of Colonel Thomas Marshall and a brother of Chief Justice John Marshall, was born in Virginia in 1770 and removed to Kentucky in early life. He became one of the pioneer lawyers of Kentucky and was said to be one of the ablest attorneys of his day. He was a member of the Kentucky Legislature from Mason County, 1797-1800; and in 1818 he was appointed reporter of the Kentucky Court of Appeals. (Collins and Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I, 499; II, 547, 576.)

⁴⁵⁵ Abel Terrill. See footnote 386, above.

⁴⁵⁶ Galveston, Texas, where the Laffites had their headquarters for a time after having been expelled from Barataria Bay on the Louisiana Gulf Coast.

⁴⁵⁷ He probably means Lemuel Paris, previously mentioned in the Journal, and a man of questionable character. See footnotes 258 and 428, above.

⁴⁵⁸ Counterfeitors and other crooks were reputed to inhabit the Attakapas country in those days, and to be engaged in smuggling and other illegal operations. See Perrin, *Southwest Louisiana*, 87, for the story of counterfeit banknotes passed off on Judge Alexander Porter by one of his clients.

⁴⁵⁹ Probably Evan Bowles. See footnote 131, above.

⁴⁶⁰ East of Bayou Milhomme.

⁴⁶¹ Probably Samuel Rice, Sr. (see footnote 244, above), who is listed in the St. Mary Parish tax records for 1818 as "Samuel R. Rice", the owner of a plantation with ten slaves on Berwick Bay. He is the only Rice who paid taxes that year in St. Mary. (*Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

Sunday 28th The last two days we have been in quest of a Pilot, but did not procure one, in consequence of the Indians being out on a hunting party, being destitute of fresh provisions for the trip, & salt not being procured, Mr Reed⁴⁶² travel'd nine miles to procure some, & after much trouble, persuaded Mons'r Verrett⁴⁶³ an old french creole to spare him a cow for 20 dollars, but if she proved with Calf he promised to pay five dollars more, this is the first time I ever heard of a Foetus in Utero being bargain'd for, the cow however was not pregnant, & mons'r was disappointed, but Reed was obliged to Butcher her himself, & get the quarters to town, as well as he could—It is an incontrovertible fact, that we are view'd by every class of people (as spies) with a very jealous eye, upon a supposition that we have been sent here on purpose to collect information for government, relative to the grants & claims of land, & to inspect into the conduct of those who have given validity to them, this inference is drawn, from their general conversation & the questions which they ask, they therefore have determined it would seem, to place every obstacle in the way of our procuring land carriage, provisions & every other necessary, & their information is so contradictory, & in almost every instance palpably false, that it needs but little penetration to preceive, that it is studied on purpose to deceive; relative to Bayou Salé, we had four different accounts, neither of which was correct; & Bole's manuoevre was most certainly the result of base design—

Monday March 1st 1819 We wrote to Mr Aborn at New Iberia requesting him to endeavour to charter the Schooner James Thermometer 48°; 60°; 60°— Lawrence for 300 dollars for the Trip (vide) our letter & Mr. Aborns answer in the Appendix mark'd A Nos 17 & 20⁴⁶⁴— Were employ'd settling our accounts preparatory to our final departure from Franklin—

Tuesday 2nd As we could not procure a Pilot to take us from Franklin to the Plaquemine by the way of Bayou Sorel, unless we

⁴⁶² Probably a member of the family who operated the Reed's Tavern in Franklin. See footnote 111, above.

⁴⁶³ Positive identification of this "old french creole" is not possible. Philip Verret was an early settler in Attakapas, who claimed a large tract of land. In 1813 there were four Verrets paying taxes in St. Mary Parish, all of whom lived on Bayou Teche: Regobert, who owned no slaves; John B., who owned one; Marelin, who owned two; and Nicholas, who owned three. They were all probably descendants of Philip Verret, and it was doubtless from one of the four that the cow was purchased. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 123, 173, 220; *Planters' Banner*, April 6, 1848.)

⁴⁶⁴ Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

went to the Indian village on the Lake Chetimaches, where there was one who promised to go with us, we determined to seek for him, should he with Punic faith deceive us, we must trust to our own knowledge, as it would be an unpardonable neglect, were we not to [p. 58] ascertain, whether by cutting through some rafts⁴⁶⁵ which impedes the passage in this Bayou, we might be able, to open a communication at all seasons, from St Martinsville, New Iberia, & Franklin on the Teche to the Plaquemine in deep water, in lieu of going through Bayou Indigo & Lake Natchez, which is twice the distance, & sometimes subject to ten days detention in Lake Natchez when the Mississippi is low or a Northerly wind prevails; Our principal object is to ascertain, the shortest & best transportation for the timber which grows upon the Islands in Lake Chetimaches, although, if we succeed, incalculable advantages will be derived by the inhabitants of the Teche in shortening the distance between their plantations & the New Orleans market,⁴⁶⁶ which will induce many to cut short canals through the Prairie, to communicate from the Teche to the Lake, which will likewise drain the superfluous water off their lands, & render them, both more extensive, more healthy, & more productive; we therefore have determined to take leave of Franklin in the morning (God willing) & will proceed even at the risk of being disappointed by the Indian Pilot.

Wednesday 3rd We got underway at Franklin this morning, having Mr Reed⁴⁶⁷ with us, & steer'd to the mouth of Reeds creek

Courses

To Pacquas SE to SSE 3
E to Fosters 1
to Waggemans 1
to Hudsons 1
Both E 1/2 S—
Dr Towles 4
SSE to Major Moors
NE quart'r 4

as per Courses in the margin which will compleat the courses, & distances in the Teche from its mouth to St Martinsville, in our passage we took Mr George Royster⁴⁶⁸ out of a flat which was bound to New Orleans, & thus had an opportunity to make some return for the civility which he had shewn to Mess'rs Hutton & Landreth at his house on Bayou Salé, a good

⁴⁶⁵ Little was done by the State of Louisiana prior to 1819 in clearing rafts and other obstructions from the bayous, so as to make them navigable for steamboats and other larger craft.

⁴⁶⁶ Residents of the Bayou Teche section usually transported their crops to market by the watercourses leading to the Mississippi either via Bayou Lafourche or Bayou Plaquemine, since it was impossible to navigate flatboats through the Gulf of Mexico, and then up the Mississippi from the Bayou against the current.

⁴⁶⁷ Probably the proprietor of Reed's Tavern at Franklin. See footnotes 111 and 462. above.

⁴⁶⁸ See footnote 439, above.

to Labeaux 2
 to Robenses now Brent
 & Wilcoxens 3/4
 To the mouth of Reeds
 creek 3/4
 Miles 17½
 Reeds creek enters
 from E to N'th 1/2
 NNW 1½ N by E 1/4
 North to W by N 1, out
 into the Lake
 Miles 3¼
 Depth 7 to 9 feet—

which will result from our exertions—

Steer'd through Reeds creek into the Lake,⁴⁶⁹ at 4h.15' PM
 the gallows on Reeds Island bore E'st ½ a mile steering West up
 the Lake, at 5h.25' the SW point of Cypress Island, bore North
 dist. 1 mile & Gallows point E by S 8 or 9 miles, & the nearest point
 on the main NNW 4 or 5 miles, this point of Cypress Island runs
 off SW 100 yards, & the Island is distant from the main 3 or 4
 miles at these bearings; the Lake between said Island & the main
 which runs in a bite from Gallows point, is 2 miles wide; from the
 last point to 10 PM we ran WSW into a bend & some time [p. 59]
 to clear the point WNW, the general course from point to point is
 W by N. here we run into a little snug cove⁴⁷¹ & encamp'd for
 the night —

Between the two last points is Bayou Grú⁴⁷² or hominy, where
 there are a few Indians, we pass'd it in the night & fired several
 muskets, but the Indians did not answer us, it does not go through
 to the Teche neither is there any navigable creek from it to the
 Lake between Reeds creek & St Martinsville, although several
 might be cut less than half a mile long, through a soft level prairie
 which would diminish the distance to the Mississippi by the
 Plaquemine considerably more than one half—

Thursday 4th At 6 AM we embark'd & steer'd West 200
 yards, & discover'd an Indian in a Canoe, & followed him to his
 settlement,⁴⁷³ which bore WSW in a bite of the Lake, in which are

⁴⁶⁹ The price of cotton in the New Orleans market fluctuated with the supply on hand, and it was often advantageous for a planter to contract for the sale of his cotton before its arrival in New Orleans.

⁴⁷⁰ Grand Lake.

⁴⁷¹ Probably near Taylor Point.

⁴⁷² Bayou Grue between Myette and Taylor points.

⁴⁷³ Probably near present Charenton Beach.

act is never lost! & as it will be seen
 in the sequel, that we arrived at New
 Orleans five days before the Flat, notwithstanding
 the detention we experienced, cutting through the rafts, &
 procuring a Pilot, & they were not detain'd by shoal water, or other
 causes in the Lake, which gave Mr
 Royster an opportunity to dispose of
 his cotton before its arrival,⁴⁶⁹ which
 is sufficient proof that our time has
 not been thrown away, in exploring
 Bayou Sorel, & of the great utility

many snags, & stumps, especially three high, & two low, off the point we came round, which are good marks to know the settlement by, which is composed of two houses only, & are a mix'd breed, it is situated 1 league from Verretts⁴⁷⁴ plantation on the Teche; At 4h.40'AM we receiv'd onboard Simon a likely young Indian of the half breed, to Pilot us to Bayou Sorel, & steer'd N 1/2 E from the Huts to the point, which bears form the point we came round

Thermometer 58°, 75° 63°—

**Peters or Pierres Indian
settlem't of the tribe
of Chetimachaux**

**To this station we had less
than from 3 to 5 feet water—**

& negroes—At 1 mile from the Indian huts, the Bayou which runs to false cape, or point,⁴⁷⁵ which is about 12 miles below St Martinsville bore W by N, in said bite distance 2 miles, & 2 miles to the North eastward of Bayou false point, is a bay 5 miles deep & 1/2 a mile wide, from the bottom to the East side of the Lake is 12 miles;⁴⁷⁶ This Bayou makes the point we are steering to an Island, (from the mouth of the said, to the East side of the lake, is between 7 & 8 miles) & is composed of 4 Islands, the divisions of 3 being very plain, the last which appears behind the Island, may probably be only a breach in the land; At the distance of 5 miles from the Indian settlement; Fleet or ragged point bore WNW, dist'ce 1/2 a mile, so call'd because at 3 miles distance, the trees in the water have the appearance of a fleet of ships at anchor⁴⁷⁷— At 10 AM the mouth of the 1st Bayou Sorel bore NE by E, 4 or 5 miles and Bayou Pigeon,⁴⁷⁸ ESE, 6 or 7 miles distant. Two other Islands are between this & the mouth of the division, close to the 1st Bayou Sorel which runs from Lake Chetimaches, to Lake Chicó,⁴⁷⁹ this may be known by a small Island in the middle of it; 40 yards to the right of which is a white shell bank to which you steer, it is at the mouth of the first Bayou Sorel, or Alfreds Bayou,

**1st Bayou Sorel—
or Alfreds Bayou
4½ Fathoms**

which enters [p. 60] ENE in 4½ fathom water, and is 12 miles distant from Pierres settlement by the courses, & 9½ miles direct— The whole of the Islands is low land cover'd with Cypress, some Maple & Branch willow—

⁴⁷⁴ See footnote 463, above.

⁴⁷⁵ Fausse Point near present Dauterive Lake.

⁴⁷⁶ This area is so altered by recent sedimentation that it is impossible to fix these points.

⁴⁷⁷ Probably Keelboat Pass.

⁴⁷⁸ Probably Little Bayou Pigeon.

⁴⁷⁹ Lake Chicot.

From the mouth of the Bayou, the course is ENE to NNE $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles where the Bayou narrow'd to 30 yards wide,⁴⁸⁰ which is occasion'd by an Island in the middle 100 yards wide, very low & full of Alligators basking in the sun, at the end of which is only 11 feet water, here the course of the Bayou varied to NW, where we had only 5 feet water & where it is not divided by Islands, it is 100 to 150 yards wide, We pass'd another Bayou on the right side, steering NNE to an Island nearest the NE or

11 to 5 feet— right side, which from its round appearance we have call'd Alfreds table, for which he ought not to be much indebted to us, as it is hardly above the level of the water, & has nothing on it but witherd Cypress trees, & Alligators, the land on each side being a Cypress swamp; to the left of the table is a Bayou which enters SW by S, when we enter'd Lake Chicó, a bend of Lake Chetimaches, where the entrance, through that part of the Lake to Bayou Sorel, on which are the Rafts, is NNW distance 5 miles; the Bayou which we have just come through, we call Alfreds Bayou, & the one we are going to, Bayou Sorel proper, to distinguish it from Bayou Petite Sorel, which runs into Bayou longue at the East end of the Lake; From the entrance of Bayou Alfred by the Island into Lake Chicó is 4 miles, the Lake in the longest part is 8, & in the widest 4 miles—The land in some places is 3 feet high, the groth Cypress, Persimon, Maple, Branch willow, Myrtle, & red Hawthorn—At 3h.20' PM We enter'd Bayou Sorel proper NNE in $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathom water, at its mouth it is from 30 to 50 yards wide, Bayou Chene,⁴⁸¹ or Oak Bayou bearing W by N $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles dist.

On running in NNE $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles, we had 5 fathom water, where it widen'd to 150 yards, the current which is occasion'd by the Mississippi runing into the Plaquemine, down the Atchafalaia, & into this Bayou to Lake Chicó, being against us, runing in a Southern direction from 1 to 2 miles per hour; at 4 PM

Bayou Sorel proper runs from Lake Chico into the Atchafalaia & is 20 miles in its course to where it enters, $10\frac{1}{4}$ miles below the junction of the Plaque-

had 2 fathoms water, pass'd two Bayous on the left side, which empties into the Bayou Chene, keeping the right hand shore on-board all the way steering NNE to N by E 2 miles when we had 4 fathoms water; The land on this

⁴⁸⁰ This fits Keelboat Pass.

⁴⁸¹ Still called Bayou Chene.

mine with the Atchafalaia; or more properly it runs from the Atchafalaia to Lake Chico⁴⁸²

Hackberry, Hawthorn, White Ash (*Fraxinus Americana*) Elm (*Ulmus Americana*) Honey locust, Shell bark (*Juglans squamosa*) Branch willow, & Hickory,⁴⁸³ so full of sap that it will not burn; it has not overflow'd since the inundation of the Mississippi in 1813 & 1815,⁴⁸⁴ the marks of which is on the trees 4 & 5 feet above the level of the earth, & 8 feet above the level of the water—

[p. 61] At 4h.25' PM The Bayou turn'd to East & ESE for 2 miles, when we pass'd a Bayou on the left, which lost itself in the Marsh, at 4h.40' pass'd Bayou Perdú,⁴⁸⁵ on the left, where we had six fathom water, course SE 1½ miles, keeping the right hand shore onboard all the way, through. At 5h.30' steering E: ENE: to East again for 4 miles, when we came to the 1st Raft,⁴⁸⁶

First Raft—

4 miles to the 2nd Raft

which we easily got through, entering on the right side, & coming out at the left, at 6 PM, it is 60 or 70 yards wide, & might easily be cleared away; pass'd it, & steer'd E, to NE & East again for 4 miles, & at 8 PM came to the 2nd Raft,⁴⁸⁷ which we tried to cut through, but could not as the night was dark, & the people tired, & we likewise run the risk of staving our boat, as the wind & current was strong against us we therefore encamp'd 20 yards below it, on the left bank of the Bayou, being heartily tired—

Friday 5th We embark'd at 7 AM, & having cut away several trees to make a passage for the boat, we easily pass'd the 2nd Raft, entering on the larboard side, and approach'd the

⁴⁸² Lower Grand River. These distances are far too great, even allowing for meanders.

⁴⁸³ Today Bayou Sorrel has a fringe of cypress along its margin which show highwater marks on their trunks. Back from the margin of the bayou the land rises gradually to the crest of the natural levees which apparently are seldom inundated except at times of unusually high water. There are a few large live oaks on this ridge. In spite of the height of the natural levee, this area is not a suitable habitat for white oak, *Quercus alba* L. This species is absent from the flood plain of the Mississippi River. Water ash, *Fraxinus caroliniana* Miller, is common in the low ground along the bayou. The green ash, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *lanceolata* (Borkh.) Sargent, which some have trouble in distinguishing from the white ash, *Fraxinus americana* L., grows in such habitats and the reference to white ash may apply to the green ash. The hickory here cannot be the shell bark but must be the water hickory, *Hicoria aquatica* (Michx. f.) Britton.

⁴⁸⁴ The Mississippi rose higher in 1813 and 1815 than for several years thereafter.

⁴⁸⁵ Probably present Bill Bayou.

⁴⁸⁶ Probably near the mouth of Berry Bayou.

⁴⁸⁷ Probably near the mouth of Moody Bayou.

From the 2nd to the 3rd Raft, at 50 yards distance Raft is 50 yds; between the Rafts where the Bayou is 60 yds wide 2½ Fathoms, above them 4 & 4½ fathoms water—

from the 2nd indeed it may nearly be esteem'd one Raft, as it hangs only by a few logs, which touch the bottom, we had however to cut away the branches of several trees

on the bank, to enable us to approach it,

we then hauld the boat over a few logs, & pass'd the whole raft in 20 minutes—It is really surprising, that for 30 years no vessel larger than an Indian canoe, has pass'd by this Bayou, which might be clear'd in a week by 20 good hands,⁴⁸⁸ with two skiffs to tow the trees onshore in order to prevent them from accumulating, & impeding the passage in any other part of the Bayou—The 1st Raft contains about 200 trees, the 2nd 150, & the 3rd 100; they are cover'd in many places with verdure & small shrubs; the scotch thistle⁴⁸⁹ grows luxuriantly on them, & even some small trees are springing up; close to the Rafts there are 2½ fathom water & two hundred yards above them from 4 to 4½ fathoms; where the Bayou is 60 yards wide; the land on its borders is about the same height, as that on the Teche, & as well as the trees already enumerated; produces the service, or wild cherry, in abundance incalculable advantages would derive to the inhabitants of the Teche by making this the thorough fare to New Orleans, but if I may judge from their supineness⁴⁹⁰ in other respects, I presume it will remain in its present state for many years yet, & probably they expect that it will ultimately be clear'd by government—

From the 3rd Raft we steer'd ENE 1½ miles towards the Atchafalaia, at 9 we went round a bluff point on the left side, which run round from ENE, to NW by N, for one mile, & then turn'd to ENE again, abreast of a Bayou which run into a Cypress swamp, [p. 62] but has no outlet, having run 1½ miles, we steer'd NNW 200 yards to abreast of Bayou Chevreuil,⁴⁹¹ which enters West, we then steer'd E, to ESE 1½ miles until 10 AM, when we enter'd the Atchafalaia, & steer'd up, N ½ W to NNW 2 miles, with a fresh breeze at South—E by N to NE 1½, N by E 1½ having 7 fathom water all the way up NE ½ N, ½ round

⁴⁸⁸ The State of Louisiana had not yet begun any systematic plan of clearing the rivers and bayous of obstructions to navigation.

⁴⁸⁹ The thistle mentioned is probably the spiny thistle, *Cirsium horridulum* Michx., which is common on all the alluvial soils of lower Louisiana.

⁴⁹⁰ For this or other reasons, this has never been a major route to the Teche.

⁴⁹¹ Probably present Mound Bayou.

to WNW $\frac{3}{4}$ to North 4 miles; when we enter'd the Plaquemine⁴⁹² or Persimon river, leaving the Atchafalia on our left, & steer'd North to Ricars⁴⁹³ $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, being the first habitation on this rout from the Teche 1 mile below the Indian village, six below Blakes or Browns,⁴⁹⁴ & $12\frac{1}{4}$ from the confluence of the Plaquemine with the Mississippi at Pipkins;⁴⁹⁵ above Ricars to Blakes or Browns, now Stills,⁴⁹⁶ the land on the East side is high & good, the chief groth Cotton wood (*Populus delloide*;⁴⁹⁷ *angulata*) some Dogwood (*Cornus Florida*) & Cane (*Arundo gigantea*) & at the other side the land is low & cover'd with Branch willow; 1 mile from the bend which runs N $1\frac{1}{2}$ W, we pass'd a boat with Cotton, having six tier of Bales, two in the boat, or flat below, & 4 above the deck, pass'd the Indian village, where we got Charles the Pilot, on our passage out; of which Jean Louis Champagne⁴⁹⁸ is the chief; at 1h.30' we landed at the North end of the village, & commenced tracking, the boat up the current runing from the Mississippi, at the rate of 5 knotts per h^{ur}, & our people track'd against it 3 making 8 miles per hour. The 1st reach from the village runs from E to SE towards Blakes where we arrived at 3.30 PM & found that Mr Brown had removed to the Opelousas, & that Capt'n Still who now resides there does not keep a house of entertainment; about a quarter of a mile down the Bayou, where are some willow trees, a Frenchman named Francois⁴⁹⁹ keeps a Tavern, where travellers may be accomodated, & from [there] the Course is from North to East & E to N, alternately, distance 6 miles to the junction of the Plaquemine with the Mississippi, in an East direction; at 6h.30' we arrived at Mr Pipkins, having walk'd half the way, here we encamp'd & took

⁴⁹² Where it enters Upper Grand Lake.

⁴⁹³ See footnote 96, above.

⁴⁹⁴ See footnote 93, above.

⁴⁹⁵ See footnote 83, above.

⁴⁹⁶ Probably Captain James Stille (or Stella), a native of New Jersey, who had entered the United States Army on June 1, 1798, as a captain of artillerists and engineers, and who resigned from the army on December 31, 1805. (Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, I, 919.) By special act of the Orleans Territorial Legislature, approved January 23, 1805, he was granted a divorce from his wife; and it was stated in the act that he was then a captain in the army. (*Acts of Territory of Orleans*, 1804-05, pp. 454-456.) William Blake, a native of the County Galway, Ireland, who emigrated to Louisiana, settled in Iberville and married into the prominent Dupuy family, was the first owner of the place. The exact identity of Brown, his successor, is not known, though he may have been J. N. Brown who later became a wealthy sugar planter of Iberville. (*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, I, 295, 321)

⁴⁹⁷ Now distinguished as *Populus deltoides virginiana* (Castiglionii) Sudworth. *Populus angulata* Michx. f. is a synonym of the species.

⁴⁹⁸ He signed his name "John Louis Champagne, Jr." to a bill of sale of a tract of land, dated "Attakapas, 26th December, 1806;" or at least that is the way his name is written by the official who witnessed his mark. Elsewhere he is called Jean Louis "Champain". (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 392; III, 148.)

⁴⁹⁹ It is impossible to identify this French tavern keeper.

up our quarters for the night— The Plaquemine at its junction, with the Atchafalaia, has 4½ fathom water, but as you ascend towards the Mississippi it shoals to 5 feet at its mouth,⁵⁰⁰ where the current runs into it, at the rate of from 3 to 6 knots; but when heavy laden boats & Flats, with sugar & cotton can come through, certainly no impediment can exist sufficient to prevent the passage of Flats from the lake, with timber, I therefore consider that this discovery, taking into view the facility with which the navigation may be open'd, is one of the most valuable acts of our inspection, one from which much good will result to the inhabitants of Attakapas in general—

[p. 63] *Saturday 6th* At 6h.30' AM, we embark'd at Pipkins, & steer'd down the Mississippi, from SE, to East, to Mr Joseph Ervins,⁵⁰¹ a fine house, & plantation two miles below Plaquemine, he obtain'd his wealth by buying & selling Negroes, & smuggling them from Africa; he is now wealthy, & no person, or few, enquires how he became so, this is another proof, that wealth in a Republic, answers the same purpose, as Nobility in a Monarchy! but I hope there are some few among us, who think other wise, & who prefer virtue, & patriotism, in a tatter'd garment, to successful villainy, in an embroider'd coat; At 8 AM, we were abreast of a point 9 miles from Plaquemine, steering South: SW by S: S: SSW: & then round to ENE in all 7 miles to Bailles⁵⁰² plantation, a Frenchman who is married to a Negresse a native of Congo, At 10, pass'd to the Northward of the last Island or No 126 between the Ohio & New Orleans, this Island is 22 miles from Plaquemine; next course ESE, 6 miles, SW by S, 5 miles, E by S, 6 miles, & at

**In the Mississippi
Lafourche Donaldsonville**

1 PM was abreast of Lafourche, which runs in SW by S; there was a schooner & several flats laying within its mouth; we landed at Donaldsonville which is the town of Lafourche, 39 miles from Plaquemine, & got some refreshment at Madam Bayonnes,⁵⁰³ embark'd again & steer'd down East past

⁵⁰⁰ Head of Bayou Plaquemine.

⁵⁰¹ Joseph Erwin, a prominent Louisiana planter and slave trader of that period, who had removed from Tennessee in 1807. At one time he owned a frontage of five miles on the Mississippi in Iberville Parish. He was under suspicion at this time by the United States authorities as a participant in smuggling slaves into Louisiana from the piratical establishments at Galveston and elsewhere. (Alice Pemble White, "The plantation Experience of Joseph and Lavinia Erwin, 1807-1836," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVII, 343-477.)

⁵⁰² Pierre Belly claimed two tracts of land on the right bank of the Mississippi River in the County of Iberville, and both were confirmed to him by the United States government in 1812. Francois Belly, a free colored man of great wealth, resided in Iberville Parish in the early period. Francois may have been the son of Pierre, or the names may refer to the same individual, as the source giving the name "Francois" is not very reliable. It is doubtless to one of these men that Cathcart refers. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 301-302; *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, I, 237.)

⁵⁰³ Further identification of this lady is not possible.

the Church, at 2h.30' past the late Dan'l Clarks⁵⁰⁴ plantation, now in the possession of General Wade Hampton,⁵⁰⁵ who purchased it for 250,000 dol's but in consequence of some informality, or probably breach of contract, on the part of Clark, he has only paid 50,000 dol's for it (the first instalment) to this day, he however keeps possession of it, which is said to have occasion'd Clarks death; they tell many hard stories of the former, which if true, I would not be ambitious to inherit his character, even with all his wealth attach'd to it;⁵⁰⁶ This plantation is 5 miles below Lafourche, & 44 from Plaquemine— Donaldsonville contains about 50 houses, & some of the best furnish'd stores of any town we have seen since we left New Orleans; Course ESE, 9 miles, round the point in the Canadian bend or settlement,⁵⁰⁷ where we saw two small pine trees, which are the only ones which grow between this & the solitary one we saw on the Teche, Course E by S 6 miles, S by E 3 do, when we were abreast of Chantreuil Church,⁵⁰⁸ at 5h.10' had steer'd S by E 4 miles, & from that time to 10h.30' PM in dif't courses 30 miles, when we encamp'd on the left bank of the river going down two miles above Mr Brown's⁵⁰⁹ plantation, having row'd & sail'd since the morning 96 miles—

Sunday 7th We embark'd at 7 AM, & steer'd down the Mississippi to Madam Montrieulle's⁵¹⁰ plantation, at 9h.15' AM pass'd

⁵⁰⁴ Near modern Burnside. Daniel Clark, Jr., sold the Houmas Plantation to General Wade Hampton in 1812. John Burnside purchased it about 1856 and by 1861 it was one of the finest sugar plantations in Louisiana.

⁵⁰⁵ Cathcart seems to have had an exaggerated notion of the value of this plantation. In 1812, shortly after Wade Hampton came into possession, it was assessed for taxes at only \$53,000, which valuation apparently included the 343 slaves attached to it. (*Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet*, February 13, 1861.)

⁵⁰⁶ Daniel Clark had died in 1813, after having been for several years a powerful figure in Louisiana politics as the leader of the anti-Claiborne faction. After his death his erstwhile political and business rivals did all they could to blacken his reputation, and Cathcart probably formed his opinion of Clark's character from conversations with such persons. However, later revelations largely sustain Cathcart's views. (Perry Scott Rader "The Romance of American Courts: Gaines vs. New Orleans," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVII, 5-322, *passim*.)

⁵⁰⁷ Reference is probably to the sharp bend in the Mississippi River a few miles below the present St. James-Ascension parish boundary line. That section along the river was called the "Acadian Coast" in those days.

⁵⁰⁸ Cantrelle Church was an old landmark on the west bank of the Mississippi, at the present village of St. James, nearly opposite the modern town of Convent. It was the first Catholic Church erected in what is now St. James Parish, and was named for Don Miguel Cantrelle, commandant of the Acadian Coast in the Spanish period. It was the first parish seat of St. James, and the church is now called St. James Church. (*Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana*, II, 199-200; Fortier, *Louisiana [Cyclopedic]*, II, 415.)

⁵⁰⁹ James Brown, brother-in-law of Henry Clay, was born in Virginia in 1766; removed to Kentucky in 1789, where he became an eminent lawyer and Secretary of State; removed to New Orleans in 1804, became Secretary of the Territory of Orleans, United States district attorney for that Territory, aided in codification of the laws, and was a member of the Convention which framed the first Louisiana State Constitution of 1812. He served in the United States Senate, 1813-1817, and 1819-1823, resigning to accept appointment as minister to France, which position he held until 1829. He died in Philadelphia in 1835. Shortly after his removal to New Orleans he purchased a tract of land on the German Coast, in what is now St. Charles Parish, about thirty miles above New Orleans; and this tract was developed into one of the largest sugar plantations in Louisiana by the 1820's. (*American State Papers, Public Lunds*, II, 322; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 745; *Dictionary of American Biography*, III, 126; James A. Padgett, ed., "Letters of James Brown to Henry Clay, 1804-1835," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXIV, 921-1178, *passim*.)

⁵¹⁰ Spelling should be "Montreuil", a French family long prominent in New Orleans and vicinity.

by Mr Destrahn's⁵¹¹ place, it has two little wings, which gives it a pretty airy appearance, steer'd SE round to E by N to NE by the meanders of the [p. 64] River to 10h AM; SE to 11h AM; E: ENE round to SSE to 11h.45', when we were off the Crevice,⁵¹² or crack in the Levée, which was broke down by the rising of the Mississippi, & overflow'd the City of New Orleans in 1816⁵¹³ & is six miles above it, at 12h.30' PM pass'd by McCarthy's⁵¹⁴ place, which is the first above the Orange grove, Wade Hamptons residence,⁵¹⁵ which we pass'd steering SE 4 miles from the City—steer'd down North and arrived at New Orleans at 1h.15' PM and took up quarters at Beales boarding house⁵¹⁶—

Mr Reed⁵¹⁷ a Virginian, who had been a resident in Kentucky for several years, & is now settled at Franklin, was in the boat with us—which was the first sail boat, he had ever been in,⁵¹⁸ his apprehension of danger, when none really did exist, afforded us some amusement; as they were the offspring of his own imagination; one day in particular, he was siting to leeward, when in a squall, we found it necessary to let fly the Fore sheet & brail up the Fore sail, when with evident marks of terror in his countenance, he involuntarily exclaim'd Rip Roar! the halters broke by G-d!!! which kept us in good humor all the afternoon; yet this man is known to be brave even to temerity onshore, but he was rather out of his element in an open boat, carrying a press of sail to expedite our arrival at New Orleans, having left Franklin at 8 AM on Wednesday the 3rd ins't

Monday 8th at New Orleans Call'd upon Com'e Patterson, & got Ellicott's Journal⁵¹⁹ from him, but I had purchased one when

⁵¹¹ Jean Noel Destrehan, a prominent French leader in Louisiana at that period. Near the present town of Destrehan, to which this family gave its name.

⁵¹² He means "crevasse", a break in the levee.

⁵¹³ One of the most serious inundations of New Orleans up to that time.

⁵¹⁴ The lower line of Miss Macarty's plantation formed the upper limit of the city of New Orleans, as established by act of the Legislature in 1818. (*Laws of Louisiana*, 1818, p. 44.)

⁵¹⁵ In addition to this Orange Grove plantation where he resided, General Wade Hampton also owned the Houmas plantation near the present village of Burnside in Ascension Parish. See footnotes 504 and 505, above.

⁵¹⁶ Not identifiable; probably one of the establishments catering to English-speaking residents and transients at that period.

⁵¹⁷ Probably Isaac Reed, who lived on Bayou Teche at that date. See footnotes 111 and 462, above.

⁵¹⁸ It is not unusual for residents of Kentucky, or of Attakapas, to be unfamiliar with sailing vessels in 1819.

⁵¹⁹ *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (Philadelphia, 1803) contained maps and other information concerning the region east of the Mississippi, which Cathcart's party were planning to survey. Ellicott had served as commissioner of the United States from 1796 to 1800, in surveying and marking the 31st parallel as the boundary between the United States and Spanish West Florida, from the Mississippi to the Chattahoochee River, as arranged by the Pinckney Treaty of 1795.

I first arrived, receiv'd answers to our letters, from Mess'r's Wailes⁵²⁰ & Aborn⁵²¹ (vide Appendix A Nos 18: 19: 20⁵²²)—

Tuesday 9th In conversation with Dr John Sibly⁵²³ (one of Mr Jeffersons correspondents)⁵²⁴ & Mr Sam'l Davenport,⁵²⁵ both residents of Natchitoches, Mr Hutton & myself were inform'd, that on the Red river, there were three or four rafts,⁵²⁶ mostly composed of Red cedar,⁵²⁷ the trees being from 18 inches to 3 feet in diameter, which it would be necessary to cut through, to make the stream navigable for boats or flats, which would draw 3 feet water, that the falls⁵²⁸ were composed of a soft kind of lime stone, which it was in contemplation to cut through, when the river would be navigable for small craft, & that the chief groth on its margin from 100 yards to some miles distance was red cedar of various dimensions; Mr Davenport declared that on the Sabine & Trinity & to the Westward of them, there exists a considerable groth of Live Oak, & that the inhabitants made the truck wheels of their carts with that timber, some of which are 3 to 4 feet in diameter; this he declares from personal knowledge, in direct

**The confluence of Red river
with the Mississippi is in
Lat'd 31° 6' N & Long'e 91°
44' W, from Greenwich &
16° 37' W, from Philadel-
phia⁵³⁰**

opposition to Darby's hypothesis,⁵²⁹ that no live oak is to be found to the Westward of the Mermentau or to the Northward of the 31° of North latitude, in the whole extent of the Territory contain'd between the Mobile &

⁵²⁰ Levin Wailes was appointed Register of the United States Land Office for the Western District of the Territory of Orleans (State of Louisiana after 1812) on April 18, 1810, and held that office until 1822. (Charles S. Sydnor, *A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region: Benjamin L. C. Wailes*, 40.) Cathcart had met him, or at least had some correspondence with him, while making the survey of the Attakapas region.

⁵²¹ Joseph Aborn was deputy collector of customs for the District of the Teche, with headquarters at New Iberia. Cathcart had seen him while in that village. See footnote 384. above.

⁵²² Reference is to Appendix to this Journal.

⁵²³ Dr. John Sibley had settled at Natchitoches on Red River prior to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and was a prominent resident of that town. In 1819 he was one of the two representatives from the County of Natchitoches in the Legislature, Samuel Davenport being the other. (*Louisiana House Journal*, 1819, p. 3)

⁵²⁴ After the Louisiana Purchase President Jefferson relied heavily upon Dr. John Sibley of Natchitoches for information regarding the topography and resources of the lower part of that purchase.

⁵²⁵ Samuel Davenport was a prominent citizen of the County of Natchitoches, and the colleague of Dr. John Sibley in the Louisiana Legislature in 1819. Both he and Sibley took an active interest in the improvement of navigation of the Red River above the falls or rapids near Alexandria. (*Louisiana House Journal*, 1819, p. 3; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1819, pp. 96-100, 122-128; 1822, p. 34; 1823, p. 90.)

⁵²⁶ These rafts were later removed in the 1830's by Henry Miller Shreve, for whom the city of Shreveport is named.

⁵²⁷ There is no red cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* L., along the Red River in Rapides Parish. Hence, the logs forming the rafts must have been carried down by the high waters from points higher up on the river.

⁵²⁸ Reference is to the rapids near Alexandria. The French called them *les rapides*, from which is derived the name of the old Rapides Post and the present Rapides Parish.

⁵²⁹ It is interesting to note that Cathcart does not appear to agree with Darby's statement of the distribution of the live oak in Louisiana, yet most of Cathcart's itinerary falls within the limits as given by Darby. Darby did not exclude live oak from the region west of the Mermentau as Cathcart implies, as can be seen by the following quotation from Darby: "On the Sabine and Calcasieu it is very rare; but becomes abundant on the lower Mermentau."

⁵³⁰ Cathcart's location of the mouth of Red River is approximately correct.

Texas & that the absence of live oak, may be consider'd as a natural demarcation [p. 65] of climate, but our informants are gentlemen of veracity, & are certainly entitled to as much credit as Mr Darby— We waited on Com'e Patterson who declared that it would be imprudent to send a vessel of any description to the Mermentau or anywhere to the westward until after the Equinox which generally is accompanied with heavy gales of wind, & with a South East gale, it would be impossible to beat off amongst such numerous shoals as there are upon that coast; that after the Equinox it would be impossible to exist for the mosquitos, & that owing to the late rising of the Mississippi & its tributary streams, this season, the greatest part of the low land would be overflow'd, this is a fact which has been corroborated by all the information we have been able to collect, as well as our own experience; he therefore join'd with us in opinion, that it would be most expedient, to proceed to explore Lakes Pontchartrain, Maurepas, Borgne, & their vicinity, which would give us full employment until May, when independent of the epidemic,⁵³¹ we would not be able to prosecute our researches for the reasons before quoted.

We ask'd, ? whether our accounts for the purchase of provisions for the boats crew, Pilotage, & other contingent expenses, amounting to \$151.75 Cts were to be settled here or at Washington; he answered it would be best to settle them here, where they were incur'd; he then inform'd us, that he would recall the Bull dog⁵³² which was upon a cruise in the Lakes as she was the only vessel on the station fit for the service (& not very fit neither) which will detain us several days, until her arrival.

Saturday 13th The last three days we were employ'd in bringing up our Journal & procuring information from several gentlemen who either board in the house or frequent it, this leads us here as well as elsewhere into considerable expense, which I presume will be taken into consideration by the Department when we settle our accounts—

At 4 PM, the Spaniard who murder'd King,⁵³³ a few days after our arrival here in the Nonsuch, & who belong'd to said vessel, was hung at the back of the town, a number of the boarders went to see the execution: I went not, I do not like such exhibi-

⁵³¹ Reference is to the yellow fever, which visited the lower Mississippi Valley almost annually during the summer season.

⁵³² A United States naval vessel of small size, equipped with two guns and two launches, and stationed at New Orleans in 1819. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 469, 601.)

⁵³³ No further information is available on the identity of this individual. Such fatal sailors' brawls were not uncommon in New Orleans in those days.

tions, but am sensible that it is necessary to make such examples for the benefit of society, & this miscreant deserv'd death, more than any other I ever heard of, for at the Gallows he confess'd, that King was the eighth person whom he had assassinated, among whom horrible to recount was the villains own mother! & that his father & brother were both hung for murder, what an infernal family they must have been!!!

Tuesday 16th Just after I had sent my letter to the Navy Commissioners to the Post office, which had employ'd me in writing the last two days— Com'e Patterson presented me with a letter which he had just rec'd from the Nevy Board of the 17th Ult'o took a copy & return'd it with my answer the next morning; the Nonsuch arrived last night from a cruise having damaged her rudder on the bar, & is now under repair⁵³⁴—

[p. 66] *Wednesday 17th* This morning I inform'd Com'e Patterson, that we were ready to meet the wishes of the Navy board, & would embark for the Mobile⁵³⁵ on the way to Fort Claiborne⁵³⁶ on the Alabama, as soon as the Nonsuch was ready to receive us, & at the same time requested him to direct Mr Ferris⁵³⁷ who is station'd at the Navy yard at Tchifonte,⁵³⁸ to send him a detaild account of his inspection since his residence there, & especially to confirm or refute a paragraph contain'd in his letter to the Commodore of the 16th of March 1817, wherein he announces the existance "of a grove of live oak, sufficient for the frames of several ships of the line, of the most enormous sizes, say from 3 to 8 feet diam'r which he believes is not to be equal'd in America," but what seems extraordinary to me, that in his correspondence since, although two years have elaps'd, he has neither confirm'd nor contradicted said report, probably he might have consider'd it conclusive. Mr Ferris is a Master in the Navy,

⁵³⁴ Such accidents were a common occurence in those days, because of the shallow water over the bar at the mouth of the Mississippi.

⁵³⁵ Mobile, at the head of Mobile Bay in the present State of Alabama.

⁵³⁶ Fort Claiborne on the Alabama River, near the mouth of Limestone Creek, about sixty-five air-line miles above Mobile, was built in 1813 by General F. L. Claiborne as a base of supplies on his invasion of the Creek country. (Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, I, 614.)

⁵³⁷ Jonathan D. Ferris, who had been commissioned as a sailing master in the United States Navy on February 28, 1809, had been for some years prior to 1819 superintendent of the navy yard on the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 258, 351, 466, 599, 927.)

⁵³⁸ The Navy Yard was located at the mouth of the Tchifunte River, near Madisonville on the northern shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Madisonville was at that time the most important town in that section of Louisiana, and had been incorporated in 1817. The Navy Yard there was large enough in 1816 to undertake the construction of a small naval vessel. Then and for many years thereafter Madisonville was the southern terminus of the road leading to New Orleans, by which flatboatmen returned after having disposed of their produce in New Orleans and over which the mails to and from New Orleans were carried. (*American State Papers, Miscellaneous*, II, 351-352; *Laws of Louisiana*, 1816-17, pp. 106-108.)

and it is presumed that he is a sufficient judge of timber fit for Naval purposes, therefore his inspection, in consequence of the Commodores orders, will supercede the necessity of the Agents going to the Lakes next season, & save the nation some expense as their services may be made use of else where (Vide) his letters to Com'e Patterson & my note to him on the subject, in the Appendix mark'd B Nos 1: 2: 3: 4, and A No 23⁵³⁹

Friday 19th Capt'd Claxton⁵⁴⁰ inform'd us, that his rudder was unship'd & repairing & that he would send a boat for our extra baggage this afternoon. Rec'd a note from Com'e Patterson relative to our embarkation & destination which was answer'd immediately; (Vide) Appendix A No 26⁵⁴¹—

Sunday 21st Yesterday we dined with Com'e Patterson for the first time, & spent a very agreeable day; At 11 AM Embark'd on board the Nonsuch, and made sail down the Mississippi, bound to Mobile, the United States Ketch⁵⁴² Surprise Lieu't Com'r McKeever⁵⁴³ being in company, as the transactions in general were not interesting, I will only mention the few that were, during this passage, at 5 PM came too 38 miles down

Monday 22nd Got underway with strong gales at East to SE, which blew so hard that we could not carry sail with safety, moor'd alongside the bank where we lay all night; at 1h.30' AM, a Meteor shot in the direction of the wind from SE to NW, duration 3", which was so very bright & long, that it illuminated the whole horizon & woods around, which with the river running through them, render'd the scene beautiful & awfully sublime—

Tuesday 23rd Got underway, the gale still continuing, pass'd Fort St Philip under the jib & reef'd foresail, & came too, to wait for the Ketch⁵⁴⁴—

Wednesday 24th The Gale still continued, lay along side the bank all day, waiting for the Ketch, which had prisoners onboard, who were sentenced to receive part of their punishment for desertion on board the Nonsuch

⁵³⁹ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁵⁴⁰ Alexander Claxton, commander of the Nonesuch. See footnote 10, above.

⁵⁴¹ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁵⁴² Type of small naval vessel. The *Surprise* is listed as a schooner mounting six guns, but capable of carrying twelve guns, which was employed in the protection of commerce on the New Orleans station after 1815. In 1819 Thomas Quinn was sailing master, Watson Morris was boatswain, and George Davis was gunner on this vessel. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 379, 466, 467, 469, 599, 600, 601.)

⁵⁴³ Isaac McKeever, a native of Pennsylvania, entered naval service on February 1, 1809, and was commissioned lieutenant on December 9, 1814. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 367, 630, 902.)

⁵⁴⁴ The *Surprise*. See footnote 542, above.

[p. 67] *Thursday 25th* The gale having abated, we ran down to the Belize, & went onshore with the Captain, on our return we found the prisoners from the Surprise onboard, three sailors & a marine, they were sentenc'd 1 to receive 100: 2: 80 & the marine fifty lashes each, half of which they receiv'd onboard the Nonsuch, the remainder was to be inflicted onboard the Surprise—

From the long continuation of the Equinoctial gales at SE, Com'e Pattersons opinion is proved to be correct; had we been on the Coast to the westward inshore, during their continuance, we would never have been able to have got an offing, for we could not carry sail in the river.

Friday 26th Got underway this morning & steer'd out of the river SE,⁵⁴⁵ kept the old Brigs mast to our larboard bow, until it bore ENE of us, & then hauld up NE by N, which took us over the Bar in 13 feet water—was a mole⁵⁴⁶ to be built for one mile over the Bar, similar to some in the Mediterranean, which could be done, but not without great expense, in consequence of the total want of materials in this vicinity, the Mississippi might be made navigable for ships of the line for several leagues above New Orleans—

Saturday 27th Moderate gales at ENE, Course N'th at 4 PM anchor'd and lay all night

Sunday 28th Got underway at daylight, & beat in, wind from E to ESE & moderate at 10 AM, the Pilot came onboard, & we bore away NNE, the East end of Dauphin Island⁵⁴⁷ bearing NW by W dist'ce 8 or 9 miles, at 1h.25' PM we shoal'd to a quarter less 7, when we hove about & stood to the Southward, & Eastward, to deepen our water, & then run up as high as Dog-river,⁵⁴⁸ & anchor'd abreast of it, having touch'd the ground several times.

Monday 29th Being anxious to get onshore, & not having a boat onboard fit for a merchant vessel, we boarded a schooner passing by, & Mr Hutton & myself took passage in her & steer'd nearly North all the way up to the mouth of the river, at 11 AM arrived at Mobile, & took passage onboard a new Steam boat,

⁵⁴⁵ Through Southeast Pass.

⁵⁴⁶ The Eads jetties were subsequently built at South Pass, but not extended over the bar.

⁵⁴⁷ Dauphine Island, at entrance to Mobile Bay.

⁵⁴⁸ Dog River, about eight and one half miles south of Mobile, on the west shore of the bay.

bound to St Stephens⁵⁴⁹ on the Tombechbée,⁵⁵⁰ & from thence to the falls of the black warrior,⁵⁵¹
Fresh gales from S to SE with merchandize & passengers for Tuscalooza & the french emigrants
with a heavy dangerous swell for a boat who are settled on the lands granted to them by Congress,⁵⁵² if there is water enough, which is doubtful. This night it blew a fresh gale from the S'ward with rain thunder & light'g.

Tuesday 30th at Mobile Wrote to Capt'n Claxton & Mr Landreth by a Pilot boat, informing them that we had taken passage in the Steam boat for St Stephens, & to the Navy Commissioners informing them of our motives for so doing (Vide) Appendix A No 27;⁵⁵³ Fresh gales at N'th & very cold—

Wednesday 31st At 7 AM this morning, Mr Landreth arrived, having been on the boat all night, they lost their course in the river, & were almost froze, this being by far the coldest weather we have had this season. We
Fresh gales at North gave the people a good warm breakfast and sent them onboard at 10 AM giving Mr Gardiner⁵⁵⁴ the officer of the boat a letter for Capt'n [p. 68] Claxton directing the destination of the Bull dog,⁵⁵⁵ on her arrival (Vide) Appendix A No 28⁵⁵⁶— The Steam boat being detain'd until tomorrow, in consequence of the last gale, we had an opportunity to view the Choctaw village,⁵⁵⁷ about 1½ miles from the town (if it may be so call'd) their huts are the work of an hour, composed of a few fork'd sticks, with others placed across, & partially cover'd with

⁵⁴⁹ The most important town in the Alabama Territory in 1819, located 142 miles southwest of modern Montgomery. The French erected a fort there about 1714, which was rebuilt by the Spanish about 1786 and probably named for Governor Esteban (Stephen) Miro of Louisiana. The fort was surrendered to the United States in 1799. The town of St. Stephens was the first capital of the Alabama Territory, and in 1818 the Bank of Tombecke, the second chartered by the Territorial Legislature, was located there. It is now but a small village in Northern Washington County, Alabama, off all the main lines of travel. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 92, 202, 616; II, 1224; Heitman, *Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, II, 541; *American State Papers, Finance*, III, 767-772; IV, 724-763, *passim*, 963.)

⁵⁵⁰ Tombigbee River.

⁵⁵¹ Black Warrior River.

⁵⁵² On March 8, 1817, Congress passed an act granting four townships on the Tombigbee River in the Alabama Territory to certain French emigrants under the leadership of General Charles Lallemand and Charles Villers, for the purpose of developing cultivation of the vine and the olive. Some progress was made during the next few years in settling the grant, but the scheme was never very successful. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 397-398, 396-399, 435-436, 536-537.)

⁵⁵³ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁵⁵⁴ William H. Gardner was a midshipman in the navy in 1819, and in 1820 he was a lieutenant on the *Nonesuch*. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 369, 463, 596, 635.)

⁵⁵⁵ See footnote 532, above.

⁵⁵⁶ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁵⁵⁷ Probably at present Choctaw Point. Mobile was the gathering point at various times for remnants of a number of tribes. These Indians were probably not all Choctaws.

bark on three sides, & open on the front, & are not sufficient to shelter them from the elements, their furniture consists of a pot to boil their corn, & a wooden platter to eat it from, a small barrel to bring water in, & a gourd shell to drink out of, they sleep on the ground wrapt up in a filthy blanket, with a stone for their pillow, which with a few cords made of deers skins, & a few who have a rifle, or gun of some sort, is the whole bulk of their worldly possessions; they are without exception the most abject of the human race, & yet these miserable beings, have both ambition, & vanity, & aim at distinction amongst themselves; frequently you will see both male & female, daub'd all over with soot, & painted with patches of a Vermillion colour on their cheeks, & round their eyes, & their heads decorated with feathers, pieces of tin, & other ornaments— The men sometimes hunt, but most frequently are seen following their females who are loaded with fire wood, & often with a young child siting on the top of their load with another at the breast, & leading a third, while their lazy husbands saunter unconcern'd behind them, waiting until the poor creatures dispose of their load, & then inhumanly deprive them of their hard earn'd trifle, & regale themselves with rum, & leave their wives & children to suffer with hunger, some few have petticoats which they procure from the inhabitants, but the children are all naked, & I have seen some stout girls as naked as they were born—it is necessary however to observe, that the Choctaws, who are in the vicinity of Mobile are outlaws, & banish'd from their tribe for various misdemeanors; I am inform'd that those who live at the village in the vicinity of Fort Jackson,⁵⁵⁸ & the whole tribe, who acknowledge the supremacy of their chief Push-mattahaú,⁵⁵⁹ are better cloath'd, & much more comfortable, but they are all, not excepting their chief, much addicted to liquor; he assumes the title of General, in consequence of having render'd the United States some essential service, during the war with the Creeks—I saw his brother at St Stephens, who calls himself Capt'n Brady,⁵⁶⁰ he was dress'd in an old blue coat, with small tarnish'd silver epaulett's & neither hat, shoe or stocking &

⁵⁵⁸ In modern Elmore County, Alabama, at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers. It was erected in 1814 by General Andrew Jackson after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, on the site of the old French Fort Toulouse. The town of Jackson was laid off just above the fort, but little remains of the town today. (Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, II, 511; Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 615; II, 798.)

⁵⁵⁹ Pushmataha, famous Choctaw chief who fought with the forces of Andrew Jackson in the Creek War of 1813. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 81.)

⁵⁶⁰ No further identification of this individual is possible.

as drunk as a lord; in fine as a nation collectively, or as individuals, they are the most filthy, stupid, drunken & contemptible of all the savage tribes which have come within my observation either in Africa or America—

The town of Mobile is pleasantly situated on the river Mobile adjoining to Fort Conde,⁵⁶¹ it contains from 1800 to 2000 inhabitants, the land is low, & the inhabitants are visited with epidemics almost every season, [p. 69] which prevents them from increasing, besides there is a great scarcity of females & the Cemetery is the only piece of well cultivated ground in its vicinity, from which a most dreadful stench arises almost continually; there are however several new houses & stores a building, & if there was a sufficient depth of water, in the bay & river for large vessels to come up to the town it would become a place of considerable importance, & participate in the trade of New Orleans, notwithstanding the land in its vicinity is a sandy pine barren, & there is not anything worthy the name of a kitchen garden anyway near it; it consequently draws its supplies from the Mississippi, & the Northern States, & every article of provision is both scarce & dear, we could not procure a potatoe in all the town, & Onions the groth of Massachusetts & Rhode Island,⁵⁶² small & growing were 6½ cents a piece; all our sea stores, therefore when we embark'd for the Chesapeake consisted of four small pigs & a demijohn of bad Teneriff wine—

Thursday April 1st Embark'd on board the Steam boat Mobile of Boston commanded by Capt'n Dan'l Paul⁵⁶³ bound to St Stephens; at 9h.25' a gun was fired from her as she left the wharf, when a salute of 17 guns was fired from Fort Condé, & the inhabitants onshore cheer'd three times, which we return'd & the parting cheer from the shore bespoke their good wishes for the success of the voyage—

First Course up N by W to N by E 7 miles to Spanish river,⁵⁶⁴ on the right 8½ miles to the mouth of Saw mill creek, where we

⁵⁶¹ Old French fort near Mobile; name later changed to Fort Charlotte. (Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, II, 487, 490; Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 232, 614.)

⁵⁶² It is interesting to note that the thrifty New Englanders were shipping vegetables to Mobile as early as 1819; also that other supplies were being brought in from the upper Mississippi Valley.

⁵⁶³ This statement of Cathcart corrects an error in date given by Owen, who says the steamer *Mobile* of Boston started for Tuscaloosa in May 1819 and reached Demopolis on the 18th of that month. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1270.) If Owen is correct in the date of arrival at Demopolis, it took the steamer nearly seven weeks to ascend the river from Mobile. This appears to have been the first steamboat to ascend the river against the current.

⁵⁶⁴ Still called Spanish River.

arrived at Meridian, it enters from NNW to NW, to this point one gen'l observation is sufficient— The river Mobile is from 150 to 400 yds wide, & is deep enough for any vessel that can

River Mobile come over Mobile bar, it is bounded on both sides by a low swamp, the groth of which is Cypress, & different sorts of Gum trees, amongst which is the sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) a clump of which is about 4 miles from the town, which serves as an excellent shelter for Deer & cattle, the land is of no use whatever at present, except to afford pasture for those animals, but might be converted into rice plantations—there seems to be a total absence of all the volatile creation, & about this point the river is margined with a thicket of Cane for about two miles, Course to 1h PM E by N to 3h.30' NE to 5h NNW, to 6h WNW at 6h.25' PM were off Chesters bluff⁵⁶⁵ 27 miles from Mobile, which we pass'd steering NW, & at 7 PM anchor'd within a mile of the old line⁵⁶⁶ which divided East from West Florida Lat'd 31°, 00' N

This bluff is pretty high, has one house on it nearly in ruins about which were three white men, & several Negroes, this is **Chesters Bluff** the only situation fit for cultivation between this & Mobile; off the Bluff is a very dangerous snag aground in 7 feet water, which ought to be avoided with caution, as it would stave any boat that came in contact with it—

[p. 70] *Friday 2nd* At 6h.30' got underway & steer'd past the old line⁵⁶⁷ up at Simons Bluff NNW. Where the line is drawn, it is mark'd by a large Cypress tree, at the mouth of a Creek

Old Spanish Line about 30 miles above Mobile, & is very
Lat'd 31°, 00' N— distinguishable, the current runs here
Wind SSE Simons Bluff at the rate of nearly 3 miles per hour, & the Steam boat stems it at the same rate, at 8h.20' pass'd Simons Bluff steering N by E, & round it ENE to E by N, off which are many dangerous snags, it is 6 miles from the mouth of the river Tensaw, & 9 from Fort Stoddart;⁵⁶⁸ here Gen'l Jackson lost his sword in the river,⁵⁶⁹ by the

⁵⁶⁵ Probably the present Twenty-seven Mile Bluff.

⁵⁶⁶ Cathcart evidently refers to the 31st parallel, which marked the boundary between the United States and Spanish West Florida from the Mississippi to the Appalachicola River after 1795. He is in error in asserting that it had once divided East and West Florida.

⁵⁶⁷ The 31st parallel. See preceding footnote.

⁵⁶⁸ On the Alabama River, near the junction of the Tombigbee, in present Mobile County, Alabama. It was an important American fort, erected not far above the 31st parallel. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 616; II, 1272; Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, II, 548.)

⁵⁶⁹ No mention of this incident appears in Bassett's *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*.

carelessness of his servant, when he was marching against the Creeks, in times of yore this accident would have been deem'd ominous, & probably would have arrested the progress of the Army—

This Bluff is 40 to 50 feet high, extends about 300 yards on the river, & has the appearance of a pine barren; it belongs with several habitations to the descendants of Simon,⁵⁷⁰ a frenchman, who had children by a Negresse, whom have increased and intermix'd with whites & blacks, & are now a group of mules, of almost every shade between the two colours—Opposite to this bluff,⁵⁷¹ & along the river are several strips of rich bottom land where Negroes were plowing, which is the first arable land between this & Mobile, where cotton & corn are planted alternately, & is said to produce 60 bush'l of the latter per Acre upon an average, the rest of the land is over run with Gum & Cypress, & in general is little more than a swamp at 9h.30' Course NNE round a bend which turn'd to WNW & W at 11 AM course N by E to E by N to ENE, at Meridian course in the reach below the Tensaw river North, up to old Fort Stoddart NW, now the site of the town of Florida,⁵⁷² the entrance of Tensaw river runs East, & is about 200 yards wide, the Mobile here, where it makes a bend is 400 yds wide & half a mile above it, from 200 to 300 yds do—

Fort Stoddart now Florida At 12h.30' we were abreast of Florida, which is merely a bluff, on the left side of the river, where it runs up NNE, with three poor habitations on it, & the land in its vicinity is a gum & Cypress swamp. Judge Tolman⁵⁷³ an Englishman, but who has been more than 30 years in America, has some clear'd land one mile above Florida, on the right bank of the river, he lives 2 or 3 miles from the town, & asks for lots in it 200 dol's each, but at present they are not worth one quarter of the money, they contain 100 f't front & 200 back— It is situated 2½ miles from the mouth of the river Tensaw—

⁵⁷⁰ No further information is available on this individual.

⁵⁷¹ That is, on the east bank of the river.

⁵⁷² There is now no important town at this point.

⁵⁷³ Judge Harry Toulmin, an Englishman by birth, came to the United States in 1793 and settled in Kentucky in 1794, where he served as President of Transylvania University for two years and was Secretary of State from 1796 to 1804. Meanwhile he had studied law and been admitted to the bar, and in 1804 Thomas Jefferson appointed him a judge of the Superior Court of the Mississippi Territory, and he later became the first United States Judge for the Tombigbee district. He settled at St. Stephens and functioned as judge until 1819. He was a member of the convention which framed the first Alabama State Constitution. He died in 1824. One of his daughters married General Edmund Pendleton Gaines. Judge Toulmin was one of the outstanding leaders in the early history of the region now comprising the State of Alabama. (*Dictionary of American Biography*, XVIII, 601-602; Owen, *History of Alabama*, IV, 1676-1677.)

At 3 PM we pass'd the mouth of the Alabama river on the right, which enters NE by E & is 250 yards wide, still in the Mobile steering North, & in the distance of half a mile came to the mouth of the Tombigbee or Tombeckbee river; this river is form'd at its mouth by an apparent Island which forms a small Lake on its right, where the Mobile narrows & the Tombeckbee runs WSW up to Nannahoubas bluff,⁵⁷⁴ where we arrived at 4 PM; The land at the confluence of those rivers is a low uncultivated marsh; had it been high good land, it would be an excellent situation for a town, but now Florida is the nearest [p. 71] town to the confluence, it may improve in time, but it

Mouth of Alabama & Tombeckbee Rivers will be a great while first, I think that the first settlers here, have been much deceiv'd, the advantages to be derived have been shamefully exaggerated by speculators, to serve their own vile purposes, it will be a century before their descendants will see their Ancestors hopes realized & many worthy families have been ruined—

At 4h.10' PM we were abreast of Nannahoubas Bluff (alias)—Bateses bluff steering NW, it is 30 feet high, composed of a red & white sandy soil, very poor, with a few Pines of a small groth growing thereon it is 3 miles above the confluence

Nannahoubas Bluff of the Tombeckbee, & belongs to a Mr Bates,⁵⁷⁵ formerly of North Carolina, who was a bitter Tory during the revolutionary war, & was obliged to fly, but not before he had set fire to some of his neighbours houses, & stole their negroes, whom he brought here with him; the son of a person who was a Colonel in the American Army at that period (and whose name I forget) came out here some years ago & amongst Bateses negroes, recognized some who had been the play fellows of his childhood, but Bates would not give them up, he is about 80 years old, & is said to be rich, yet his habitation which is situated at the East end, near the declivity of the bluff, where the land declines to a Swamp, has a miserable appearance,⁵⁷⁶ the course past it is due East, the current running

⁵⁷⁴ Now the village of Nannahubba.

⁵⁷⁵ Joseph Bates, Sr., claimed 1,000 acres of land on the east bank of the Tombigbee River, under a Spanish order of survey and settlement dated August 18, 1795. His plantation was at Nannahubba Bluff, just above Fort Stoddert. He supplied the canoe in which the messenger went down to Fort Stoddert on the night of February 19, 1807, to warn Captain Gaines of the approach of Aaron Burr. His son, Joseph Bates, Jr., was later a prominent citizen of Mobile County, which he represented in the Alabama Legislature, 1829-1830, 1836-1838, and 1840-1841. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 630, 642, 823, 846; Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1027; James Albert Pickett, *History of Alabama*, II, 218.)

⁵⁷⁶ Many well-to-do southern planters continued to live in relatively humble homes long after Cathcart's visit.

W by S 2 miles per hour; course E by N to N at 7 PM we passd the short cut or creek, which runs East from the Tombechbee

Short cut or navigable creek which runs from the Tombeckbee to the Alabama into the Alabama it is 7 miles from one river to the other, is from 30 to 50 yards wide, and from 10 to 15 feet deep; when the rivers

commence rising the Alabama always takes the lead, which causes a strong current to run through it in a West direction, from that river into the Tombeckbee, care therefore must be taken, (when the Alabama is very high) in passing its mouth, or you will be precipitated against the left bank of the Tombeckbee before you are aware of danger; along its banks there is a good path for horsemen, when the river is low, but when high it is impassible, it is 53 miles from St Stephens, & 58 from Mobile— At 7h.15' PM we anchor'd for the night—

Saturday 3rd At 6h.30' AM we got underway & steerd North, indeed the whole course of the river runs in that direction, although it has many bends, pass'd Tho's Bateses⁵⁷⁷ plantation, he is about 70 years old, & not quite so rank a Tory as his brother; Mrs Rene⁵⁷⁸ who is now onboard was a Miss Johnson, whose father was likewise a rank tory during the revolution, & had to take refuge here in consequence of his persecutions during that trying period, at 8h.50' we had changed our course in 20' from ENE to WNW, this bend has a creek running behind the bank, which makes it a Peninsula it contains 450 Acres, is good land, & Mrs Rene to whom it belongs, says her husband was offer'd 50 dol's per acre for it. At 10h.30' we were off McIntoshes now Johnsons bluff,⁵⁷⁹ in Lat'd

McIntoshes bluff 31, 12 N, for about a mile it is of different heights, from 6 to 30 feet, is composed of a sandy clay soil, & has [p. 72] about 20 habita-

⁵⁷⁷ Thomas Bates claimed over 600 acres of land on the west bank of the Tombigbee River on the basis of occupancy since 1797. He is doubtless the man referred to by Cathcart. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 630, 641, 642, 756-757, 764, 787, 829, 833, 850.)

⁵⁷⁸ Cornelius Rain claimed a tract of 400 acres on the west bank of the Tombigbee River, under a Spanish grant of June 10, 1795. John Johnson claimed another tract of 400 acres in the same location, under a Spanish grant of the same date; and Daniel Johnson (apparently John's son) claimed another tract of 800 acres, under a Spanish grant of the same date. Their plantations were located at the place formerly called McIntosh Bluff, the name of which was changed to Johnson's Bluff after the Johnsons settled there. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 632, 636, 639, 640, 678-679, 692-693, 757, 784, 786; Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, V, 286, 291, 295, 669, 734; VI, 573.)

The lady mentioned by Cathcart was doubtless the wife of Cornelius Rain and the daughter of John Johnson, as one source mentions that Rain was the son-in-law of John Johnson. Cathcart apparently attempted to spell her name as if it were French.

⁵⁷⁹ McIntosh Bluff, a high point on the west side of the Tombigbee River, was named for Captain John McIntosh, Scotch chief of the Creek Indians, who built his home there while attached to the British army in West Florida. It was the first county seat of Washington County, Mississippi Territory, which was created in 1800, and it was later the county seat of Baldwin County, Alabama, until 1820. Its name was changed to Johnson's Bluff after John Johnson settled there. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 918.)

tions, & negroes on it, mostly for negroes, the groth is Pine & some small Birch (*Betula lenta*)⁵⁸⁰ & Sassafrass, the land is poor, but it is a very handsome situation & capable of improvement; it is situated on a bite or small bay, form'd by the washing away of the land by the current on that side, while the bottom land on the other increases, but not in the same proportion, here we saw the first flock of sheep, since we left Mobile At about 1 mile NW of this is Baldwin Courthouse & Jail,⁵⁸¹ between the Bluff & which are three large Pear trees, which is esteem'd a great rarity in this country, below the bluff Mrs Rene went onshore at her plantation, & sent us off some good mutton & salad, we made fast to the upper end of the Bluff where it runs North & South, & makes the head of the bay; the river from this tends ENE, here we remain'd all night to take in 16½ cords of wood, & to repair our Engine, during which we experienced very heavy rain & thunder & lightening with the wind to the Southward & excessively warm,⁵⁸² at 9 PM the wind came round to the Northward and became so cold that we were obliged to shut up the Cabin & to cover ourselves with blankets at night, the Thermometer could not have fallen less than 25° in half hour, these sudden changes are frequent, & are the principal cause of the diseases of this country—

Sunday 4th We got underway at 6AM & run E by N 2 miles when we anchor'd to repair the machinery, & got underway again at 3h.15' PM, course through the next reach NW, pass'd some cultivated bottomland on the right side, when the Hut on it bore South, distant a quarter of a mile, we saw three channels & pass'd two inlets which appear'd like rivers 50 or 60 yards wide on the left, & run in 7 or 8 miles, the first bearing WNW, & the 2nd NNW, we steer'd up the 3rd NE by N which is a continuation of the river keeping the right bank onboard all the way, this is worthy of remark as a stranger might easily be deceiv'd & take the wrong channel, the land is low & partially clear'd, with a creek or overflowing of the river behind it, & appears only fit for the cultivation of rice, above which the river narrow'd to 120 yards, with Cane breaks on the margin to the waters edge, & the cur't runing from 3 to 4 miles per hour courses steer'd to 6h.45' PM from N, to WNW, & then round to East, to 7 PM when we anchor'd for the night— The groth on this river in general is Sycamore

⁵⁸⁰ The tree mentioned is probably the red or river birch, *Betula nigra* L. Although *Betula lenta* L. occurs in Alabama, it is confined to the northern portion.

⁵⁸¹ Many of the county seats in sparsely settled sections of the country consisted of little more than the courthouse and the jail in those early days.

⁵⁸² Typical "polar front", characteristic of winter weather in most of the Mississippi Valley.

(*Platanus occidentalis*) Black gum (*Nyssa salvatica*) Maple, Red oak, Ash, Birch, Cypress Willow, & Pine, besides those particularly mention'd— This evening we pass'd by two barges loaded with cotton, all the rowers were white men, who exclaimed a Steam boat by G-d⁵⁸³ & then complimented us in the stile of the Kentucky boat men on the Mississippi—

Monday 5th We got underway at daylight, course E to E by S, at 8h.20' were abreast of David Files⁵⁸⁴ plantation, he came up with us from Mobile, where he had been to purchase flour & other provisions, he is an industrious [p. 73] man, on his plantation which is call'd Bullpen, & which looks thriving, he has a good cotton gin, the course past it is NNW distant from St Stephens 30 miles, at 9 AM the meanders of the river were so gradual & short, that it became impossible to note the precise courses, at 11 AM we pass'd Israel Pikens⁵⁸⁵ plantation, formerly a Member of Congress from N Carolina and now Register of the Land Office at St Stephens, the next reach runs N by W & appears closed like a mill pond, the river in some places 250 yds wide, & the cur't runing at the rate of 3½ miles per hour; from this plantation to the town of Jackson is 17 miles, & from thence to St Stephens 10, 27 in all— Landed Mr Gullett⁵⁸⁶ 23 miles below it, & at 3 PM past Doctor Strong's⁵⁸⁷ plantation, steering from WSW to SSE in a

⁵⁸³ The boatmen were naturally surprised, as this was the first steamboat that had ever ascended the river from Mobile against the current. (See footnote 563, above) The St. Stephens Steamboat Company had been chartered in 1818, but the first steamboat which it had built was unable to stem the current on the return trip from Mobile. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1270.)

⁵⁸⁴ David Files was a prominent resident of that section. He was one of the directors of the Bank of Tombbecke and one of the incorporators of the St. Stephens Steamboat Company, both chartered in 1818. He died in 1820. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1224, 1270; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, II, 313.)

⁵⁸⁵ Israel Pickens was born in North Carolina on January 30, 1780. After graduation from Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1802, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and practiced in his native state. He served in the North Carolina senate in 1809, and was then elected to Congress, serving from 1811 to 1817. He was appointed Register of the Land Office in the Mississippi Territory in 1817, with headquarters at St. Stephens, which post he held until 1821. He was prominent in local affairs, being the first president of the Bank of Tombbecke at St. Stephens which was established in 1818. He was governor of Alabama, 1821-1825, and during his administration was a leader in the movement for the establishment of the University of Alabama. He served as a United States Senator from Alabama for a few months in 1826, by appointment, but he declined to be a candidate for election to a full term; and in the same year he declined an appointment as United States Judge for the District of Alabama. He went to Cuba in search of improved health, and died near Matanzas on April 24, 1827. His body was brought back and interred in the family cemetery near Greensboro, Hale County, Alabama. (*Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 1410; *Dictionary of American Biography*, XIV, 561; *American State Papers, Finance*, III, 767-772; IV, 724-763, *passim*, 963.)

⁵⁸⁶ George Samuel Gullett, a native of France, came to the United States in 1804, landing at Charleston, South Carolina, and later residing for a time in Boston. In 1817 he established a plantation at a high point on the left bank of the Alabama River, a short distance below the mouth of Pursley Creek, in modern Wilcox County. A fort had been built here by the settlers in 1813, as a defense against the Indians. The fort was called Fort Hawn; but after its abandonment the height became known as Gullett's Bluff, after the New owner of the plantation. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 615, 677; III, 712.)

⁵⁸⁷ Thomas I. Strong was a prominent resident of the St. Stephens district, and was one of the thirteen directors of the Bank of Tombbecke when it was established in 1818. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1224.)

short bend, so near the shore on the left bank, that I pull'd some Moss from off the Doctors trees; here we saw the 2nd flock of sheep between this & Mobile, it is in a rapid state of improvement, handsomly sown with cotton seed, which has just commenced vegetation, but his house is a miserable habitation as all we have seen in this country are & from appearance, one would immagine, that the inhabitants of the Southwest'n country, have very different ideas of comfort, from their brethren of the North; this may in a great measure be attributed, to the mildness of the climate, the great scarcity of mechanics, & the exorbitant price of their labour; The river continued to wind in so many crooked turns all round the Compass, that it has obtain'd the name of the Sunflower bend;⁵⁸⁸ to take the courses correct, it would be requisite to come down the stream in a boat fited expressly for the purpose; at 5h.45', we were abreast of Mr Gulletts plantation, the land looks good, but the house like all the others a miserable hovel, & the women who were assembled on the bank, to see the Steam boat, old & ugly, he however mended the prospective with some good mutton, which he presented to the Captain & of which we partook; opposite to this place are the remaining piquitts of an old Fort,⁵⁸⁹ which was occupied during the war with the Creeks; it is situated on a sand hill, just above the mouth of a small creek, where from the hill issues an excellent spring of fresh water, so cold that you cannot bear to hold your hand in it, at 7 PM we anchor'd for the night— Dr Strong is an Englishman of good character & so very corpulent, that he is said to weigh 320 lbs— Capt'n Penn⁵⁹⁰ our pilot is apprehensive that they will not be able to get up to the falls, which will be a great disappointment to the owners, as the freight from Mobile to Tuscalooza is from 4 to 5 dol's per bar'l & to other places on the river in an increased proportion; Passengers pay from Mobile to the falls of the Black warrior 48 dol's each, & to St Stephens 12, & we have several on board bound there, & to several plantations on the river—

Tuesday 6th Got underway this morning & steer'd WNW until we saw the town of Jackson⁵⁹¹ on a hill, when the course of the river turn'd to N by E, at 11 AM [p. 74] we were abreast of

⁵⁸⁸ The name is preserved in the town of Sunflower, to the west on the Southern Railroad.

⁵⁸⁹ Probably the old Fort Hawn. (See footnote 586, above.)

⁵⁹⁰ A member of the crew of the Steamboat *Mobile* of Boston, then making its first ascent of the river. See footnotes 563 and 583, above.

⁵⁹¹ On the Tombigbee River, in modern Clark County, Alabama. It was established in 1813 as Republicville, the name being changed to Pine Level in 1816 and later to Jackson. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 797.)

Jackson's landing Jacksons landing, on the right bank of the river, on which is a new store, & some old buildings; the Ferry is kept here, which is crossd in a scow to the opposite side, where the road commences to St Stephens dist'ce 10 miles The land from the ferry to the town of Jackson regularly ascends, for about half a mile, to a level plain of more than a mile square, formerly call'd Pine level, on which the town is built, & contains from 80 to 100 houses, including a Hotel, & 10 or 12 stores, it has excellent spring water, is esteemd very healthy, & is the hand-somest situation for a town of any on this river, but it is inconvenient to carry merchandize so far from the landing to it— Course past Jackson NW by W, & from thence the reach is long & straight, from W to WNW, clear up to St Stephens. At 12h.35' we pass'd a plantation on the right bank of the river, which owing to the rise of the river, was over flow'd up to the door of the house, behind which, at a short distance, were squated several African negroes, with visible marks of dejection in their countenance; they were seiz'd & sold a few months ago, by the Captors, & the officers of government, to their present owner, & is it just! cannot the legislature devise some means to prevent this abominable trafick, & the selling of them for life, if they must be sold at all, let it be for a term of years only, & for a sum barely to indemnify the Captors & government, for the actual expense they may have incur'd, & when their time expires let them be sent to the Colony about to be establish'd on the coast of Africa, by the Colonization society,⁵⁹² inspired with a grateful sense of the justice & humanity of the nation who restored them to liberty & their native soil?

At 3h.15' PM we pass'd a Bluff, which is the highest land between this & Mobile composed of rotten limestone, we pass'd by it steering W by N, and at 3h.30' arrived at St Stephens landing, a considerable distance from the town, & made fast to the bank—

Town of St Stephens St Stephens is situated about three quarters of a mile from the landing, on a hill of lime stone, 150 feet above the level of the river, which is now 25 feet higher, than it is at its lowest ebb, it contains from 300 to 350 houses, & from 1500 to 2000 inhabitants, several Taverns & stores, & one Church, which is likewise used oc-

⁵⁹² The American Colonization Society was established in 1817, one of its purposes being the removal of manumitted slaves to Liberia; but it was not until 1821 that the first contingent of Negroes was transported to Africa. (*Dictionary of American History*, I, 59.)

casionally for a Theatre;⁵⁹³ it is reputed very healthy, the water is impregnated with lime, & the river water when filter'd, is not unpalatable

We went to see the quarry, from whence the stone is cut in square blocks, the thickness of the walls of the houses they intend to build, it makes a handsome appearance but cannot be strong, as it crumbles even in the seting, owing to its not being exposed a sufficient time to the sun & air to dry & harden, it resembles the stone of Malta,⁵⁹⁴ but is not quite so compact, having a greater quantity of sand in its composition, which is always exposed to the sun, & air, & kept cover'd from the rain, for at least one year before it is used—

In this Quarry a petrified fish, resembling a Shark was found—[p. 75] & oister, & scallop shells are found daily, I have a small one which Mr Hutton pick'd out of the solid stone, ?Query, how did those marine substances get there ?did ever the sea reach these hills, at 200 feet above the bed of the river ?or were they thrown up by a convulsion of nature at, or since, what is call'd the general deluge, no sign of any volcanic eruption appears anywhere on this river. Opposite to Smiths Tavern, the sign of the golden ball,⁵⁹⁵ in the Main St where we put up, is the highest hill in town, on which is the remains of an old fort,⁵⁹⁶ from a little above the base on the main street, there is a narrow path, which leads down to an artificial cave, cut in the rock 16 or 18 feet square, used by the Spaniards⁵⁹⁷ as a Magazine, & store to preserve ammunition & provisions from the depredations of the Indians; it is about 50 feet perpendicular to the mouth of the Cave, & from it to the river at least 100— Here are many Choctaw Indians who are much better dress'd than their brethren at Mobile, but there are some outlaws also equally as miserable—

The soil is composed of red clay & sand mix'd, on a bed of lime stone, which if pulverised, & mix'd with the soil, would resemble that of Madeira,⁵⁹⁸ & no doubt would be well calculated

⁵⁹³ It is interesting to note that the church was occasionally used as a theatre, as many of the frontier Protestants were bitterly opposed to theatres in general.

⁵⁹⁴ Island in the Mediterranean; a reflection of Cathcart's observations during his long residence in that area.

⁵⁹⁵ Early American taverns displayed easily recognizable signs. Many of the travelers were illiterate and could not read printed signs, but could recognize symbols.

⁵⁹⁶ Fort Stephens, erected by the Spanish, but surrendered to the United States after the Pinckney Treaty of 1795. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 1224.)

⁵⁹⁷ The Spanish claimed the territory between the 31st parallel and the parallel of the mouth of the Yazoo River from 1783 to 1795.

⁵⁹⁸ Island where the famous Madeira wine was produced; familiar to Cathcart from his long residence in the Mediterranean area. The French emigrants on the Tombigbee were planning to devlop vineyards at the time Cathcart was in Alabama. See footnote 552, above.

for the cultivation of the vine, indeed the hills and dales in this vicinity, partake of the romantic appearance of that Island—The greatest number of houses in this town are of wood, some are of brick, & a few of Square lime stone; Smiths tavern where we put up, is a frame building of very indifferent structure, the accomodation bad, beds horrid, attendance abominable, provisions & liquors detestable, Landlord civil, & landlady handsome, & every thing exorbitantly dear—

As Mr Freeman⁵⁹⁹ is not here, we wrote to Mr Israel Pikens the Register of the land office, & sent it by Mr Burrows to Court 20 miles distance from hence, where he was on business; Mr Burrows politely promised to bring his answer, if no quicker conveyance offer'd we thus avoided the expense of sending a Courier extraordinary, which would have been necessary, as the sale of the land on Cedar creek was to take place next week, & it was requisite to make immediate application to the Register, to stop the sale of it—(Vide) our letter to him in the Appendix & his answer to it, mark'd A Nos 29 & 30—⁶⁰⁰

Wednesday 7th We remain'd here to day waiting for Mr Piken's answer, procuring information, & enquiring for a conveyance to Claiborne,⁶⁰¹ but as the court is siting, we cannot find even a single horse to hire, & I am apprehensive that we will be obliged to go to Jackson by water—

Thursday 8th Fortunately two Jersey waggons⁶⁰² arrived to day from Claiborne with gentlemen going to Court, one was to return immediately, in which we dispatch'd Mr Landreth, & by much persuasion induced the owner of the other to wait for us

⁵⁹⁹ Thomas Freeman, a native of Ireland, came to the United States in 1784 and entered the public service in 1793 as a surveyor. President Washington appointed him surveyor of the boundary between the United States and Spanish West Florida (the 31st parallel, May 24, 1796, to serve under Commissioner Andrew Ellicott. However, he quarrelled with Ellicott and later, in the Burr Conspiracy trial, he testified in favor of General James Wilkinson, in opposition to the testimony of Ellicott. He directed the engineering construction of Fort Adams, 1798-1799, and in 1808 President Jefferson sent him on an expedition to explore the Red River. In 1808 he was appointed Register of the Land Office for Madison County, Mississippi Territory, in the Huntsville District, and was also intrusted with the organization of the county government. In September, 1810, he was appointed Surveyor of the Mississippi Territory, with general supervision of the surveys in the Orleans District and West Florida, his position being popularly known as "Surveyor General of the United States". He held this office until his death in 1821; but in 1818 he had relinquished to another official the duties of surveyor in the Alabama Territory. (Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Mississippi* [Cyclopedic], I, 728, 749-750.)

⁶⁰⁰ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁶⁰¹ Fort Claiborne. See footnote 536, above.

⁶⁰² Sturdily constructed farm wagons, originally manufactured in New Jersey, from which the name is derived. They long continued as the favorite vehicles employed by southern planters to haul heavy loads over poor roads.

until tomorrow at 12 OClock, Colonel Dinsmore⁶⁰³ formerly a Purser in the Navy, brought Mr Pikens answer & spent the evening with us—

[p. 76] *Friday 9th* We call'd at the Registers office, & as a doubt was implied in his letter to us, of the sufficiency of our authority under the "Act of Congress," I deposited a copy of my Commission, & likewise of a letter which I had receiv'd from the Commissioner of the general Land Office, inclosing one to Mr Freeman, Surveyor gen'l at St Stephens, a copy of which I likewise deposited, the originals were forwarded from Norfolk last November, but we never receiv'd any answer from Mr Freeman, copies of the said were likewise forwarded to Mr Levin Wailes Register of the Land Office at Opelousas, answers to which we did not receive until the 8th of March—after we return'd to New Orleans, (vide) Appendix A Nos 16, 18, 19, 24—⁶⁰⁴

We then took a copy of the Survey, & Map of the lands on Cedar creek⁶⁰⁵ & its vicinity, which will prevent the necessity of a special survey, & expedite our return to Washington, as we will only have to select the sections on which timber grows, worth reservation, to the Map of which I refer; At Meridian we took leave of our host, & call'd on Colonel Dinsmore, *en passant*, & proceeded to opposite Jacksons ferry & cross'd the Tombigbee at 3 PM, the road which we travell'd on was mountainous, but tolerable good; At Jacksons town, we stop'd to rest the horses, & to dine, we put up at the Travellers rest,⁶⁰⁶ which is the best house & accomodations anywhere on this road; after dinner we continued our Journey until late at night, as **Jackson's Town** we were refused lodgings at several houses on the road, & abused by a Mr Walker⁶⁰⁷ for asking for them, we were at last receiv'd into a loghouse, where there was only a

⁶⁰³ Silas Dinsmoor, a native of New Hampshire, was long connected with Indian affairs for the United States government, having been an agent among the Cherokees in the 1790's, among the Chickasaws and Choctaws in 1805 as a commissioner in making treaties with them; and about that time he was appointed as resident commissioner or agent among the Choctaws. He encouraged the Indians to become self-supporting by engaging in agriculture, and he established a plantation of his own near his agency. He was dismissed as Choctaw agent in 1813, but he continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of this tribe for years thereafter. On May 30, 1819—within the month of his contact with Cathcart—he was appointed by Thomas Freeman as principal deputy surveyor of the district east of the Island of Orleans. (*American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, I, 532, 689, 697; II, 88, 243; Rowland, *Mississippi, [Cyclopedic]*, I, 649; Sydnor, *A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region*, 40, 53-55, 60, 125, 251.)

⁶⁰⁴ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

⁶⁰⁵ A tributary of the Alabama in the vicinity of Claiborne.

⁶⁰⁶ Name of the tavern at which Cathcart lodged.

⁶⁰⁷ John and William Walker both settled in modern Clarke County, Alabama prior to 1811, and in that year the latter set up a mill on Bassett's Creek. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I 271; II, 798.) It is doubtless to one of these men that Cathcart refers.

young girl (whose mother was absent) and a negro wench, & were furnish'd with some good coffee, & much better beds than either at Mobile or St Stephens⁶⁰⁸—

Saturday 10th Early this morning we continued our Journey over an excessive bad road, which was sometimes very dangerous, from precipices, fallen, & falling trees, & stumps, it leads through a continued forest, the principal groth of which was Pine, it likewise produces here as well as on the otherside of the Alabama, White & Red Oak, Beech, Ash, Maple, Mulberry, Sycamore, Magnolia, & a few small Cedars, the land is rolling barren sandy soil, the underwood different kinds of shrubs, briars, & vines & on the banks of the river Cane & Palmetto; at 2 PM we cross'd the Alabama where the river is 350 yards wide, the current runing about 3 miles per hour, the banks is from 150 to 200 feet high, in a steep ascent from the level of the river, where the water had fallen at least 20 feet, perpendicular, although at St Stephens on the Tombigbee no visible fall had taken place—From Jackson to where we cross'd is 35 miles, & from the Ferry to Fort Claiborne 6, which makes 41 miles from Jackson & 51 from St Stephens—At 5h.30' PM we arrived

Fort Claiborne at the town of Claiborne, & put up at Capt'n Mabrys Tavern,⁶⁰⁹ which is a frame & log-house, neither wind nor water tight, where we had [p. 77] to sleep on the floor of the Bar room, on hard moss matrasses, not more than an inch thick, & for this accomodation we were charged \$1.75 Cts each, per day, without liquors—Claiborne is situated on the banks of the Alabama, at least 250 feet above its level, & is nearly at the same distance from its mouth, that St Stephens is from the mouth of the Tombeckbee, it is composed of mean log houses, which afford a temporary residence to settlers who arrive from other States of the Union, until they purchase lands to settle on, at different distances from it, they frequently change their owners, & are generally much out of repair nevertheless, the rents are enormously high, & if a family is obliged to remain here any considerable time before they suit themselves, they will find themselves without the means to make a purchase, when an opportunity offers; the advantages which settlers are said to derive from removing to all the new settlements which we have visited, has been most shamefully exaggerated, by speculators,

⁶⁰⁸ Many residents along the main highways in those days provided travelers with better accommodations than those afforded by the taverns in the towns.

⁶⁰⁹ No further information is available on this tavern keeper.

who are continually on the watch to deceive; hundreds have been ruin'd by those miscreants, & reduced from competency, to abject want; this country is calculated for industrious Mechanics,⁶¹⁰ & men of property only, who have a gang of Negroes of their own, & can afford to bring out provisions, & every other necessary for their families, until they can raise enough to maintain them on their own lands, those will become rich here, as well as on the Mississippi, but not so fast, & Mechanics by industry will thrive, as they will be constantly employ'd & earn from two to three dollars per day—This town is more than a mile long, and is said to contain 2000 inhabitants,⁶¹¹ but they are continually fluctuating which renders it difficult to ascertain the exact number—At the upper ferry there is a cotton gin, & ware house where flatts are laden, & discharge, but the ascent is steep & difficult, for wheel carriages, sleighs in my opinion are better calculated & not so liable to recoil when loaded with merchandize.

At the lower ferry about a mile from the centre of the town, the ascent is not so long or steep, but the road is narrow & crook'd, & on the bank of the river, which in some places is nearly perpendicular & very dangerous, the Cart which brought our trunks when we were about to embark, an instant after they were taken out, roled over the bank, & if the riging had not given way, the horse would have been dash'd to pieces, as the cart was; these inconveniences have induced the inhabitants to erect machinery on the bank of the river, which is 280 feet high, directly in the centre of the town to load, & unload their crafts; the situation is in a ravine, the machinery consists of two tier of crabs, & it is intended to haul the merchandise up a platform in sleighs on slides, to the 2nd story of the upper house, from whence, it will be struck or roled on the [p. 78] bank on a level, & close to the main street—The selection of this site in my opinion is injudicious, & the machinery ill contrived & expensive, had a site been chosen, where the bank was perpendicular, or nearly so, a swinging Crane, such as are used in many of the Dock yards in Europe, for hoisting in heavy guns & anchors, & steping lower masts of ships of the line would answer every purpose much better, with less labour & expense. There is a church, or place of worship here, where divine service is perform'd twice on the Sabbath day, & no doubt, it will in time become a place of con-

⁶¹⁰ There was a scarcity of skilled mechanics in all frontier communities in those days, and their wages were much higher than those of unskilled laborers.

⁶¹¹ Population was only 350 in 1830.

siderable importance; its progress has as yet been retarded, by the claim of Weatherton,⁶¹² an Indian of the half breed, who claims a considerable tract of land in this section, in the centre of which is the town of Claiborne, & until it is satisfied, the inhabitants are determined not to go to any expense they can possibly avoid, as a proof of which there is not a brick chimney in all the town, although the soil in many places is admirably calculated to make bricks—The short time we remain'd here gave us very little opportunity to examine the geology of this country, which is certainly worthy of investigation, as it appears different from any other we have observ'd—The upper stratum is composed of sand & lime stone, in many places decomposed, the 2nd of Clay, of various colours, textures, & mixtures, & the substratum (where we examined) of perfect sea shells, in many places likewise decomposed; these circumstances I think are well worthy the research of those who are curious, & have studied geology on an extended scale—Mr Landreth who came from Jackson by a different rout, informs us, that about 9½ miles from this town, his attention was arrested by a beautiful circular mound of earth, on a very high hill on the left hand side of the road, the base of which appear'd to him to be about 200 yards

Indian Mound 9½ miles from Claiborne in diameter, elevated about six feet above the hill on which it stood,

which is the highest land in this

vicinity from whence arose a regular cone 200 feet high at least, which terminated in a plane of 100 yards diameter, on which are several cedar trees, that this Mound is the work of art, there can be no doubt, but for what purpose, or at what period it was erected, there is not even a conjecture, nor dare I hazard one, it is very extraordinary that I only found one person here, who even knew of its existance, this was a Mr William Patton⁶¹³ who practices laws, he says that he ascended to the top of it, by a regular winding ascent, which goes round in regular progression from the base, to the summit, from whence there is a beautiful prospect of the surrounding Country for many miles, in other respects he confirms Mr Landreths report⁶¹⁴ this natural curiosity is well worth the examination of the curious, who have time &

⁶¹² He refers to William Weatherford, a noted Indian chief called "Red Eagle", who participated in the massacre of Fort Mims and later surrendered to General Andrew Jackson. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, IV, 1784-1785.)

⁶¹³ William B. Patton was a leader in the organization of the Alabama Grand Lodge of Masons in 1821, and was Grand Master of that organization in 1823. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, II, 965; IV, 1381.)

ability to make such an investigation worthy of insertion in the history of this territory—

[p. 79] The reach up the River from the Ferry to Claiborne is NW by N dist'ce 6 or 7 miles the river is from 300 to 350 yards wide, the cur't runs at present 3 to 3½ knots the general groth, & aspect is the same as on the Tombeckbeé, except that the banks is much higher, & the geology different; which we have not time to investigate, the current likewise, is generally more rapid, than at the same periods in the Tombeckbeé; therefore for want of data, & time to procure it, we here conclude the description of that part of the Alabama territory & river which we have visited—

Sunday 11th Bespoke horses to go to Cedar creek, as there was nothing to do there but to select the sections on which the timber grew, & mark them on the Map of the survey which we had procured at St Stephens, my presence was not necessary, Mr Hutton would have been enough to have gone on this duty, but as traveling alone is very disagreeable Mr. Landreth went with him, I remain'd in Claiborne, which saved the expense of carriage & gave me an opportunity of acquiring some useful information; at night we experienced a gale of wind accompanied with heavy showers of rain, which has made traveling very disagreeable on such bad roads wholy in a state of nature

Monday 12th Mess'r's Hutton & Landreth departed to inspect the lands on Cedar creek in company with a son of Col'l Philips,⁶¹⁴ who went with them as a guide, he has an establishment on section 32; Township 7, Range 4 East, (see the Map & reserve— At Meridian a military boat arrived from Fort Montgomery,⁶¹⁵ as we had no intelligence of the Bull dog, I made enquiry of the Sergeant to know when she would return, intending to endeavour to procure a passage in her to Mobile, he infrom'd me that he was under the command of Lieu't Wilson,⁶¹⁶ who would be up this

⁶¹⁴ Probably Joseph Philips, who had settled on land between the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, in modern Clark County; Alabama, prior to 1812. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 271.)

⁶¹⁵ Located near the Alabama River, opposite the "cut-off", about two miles from Fort Mims. It was erected in 1814 as a defense against the Indians. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 615; Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, II, 525.)

⁶¹⁶ Probably Henry Wilson, a native of Pennsylvania, who entered the army as an ensign in 1813, was promoted to second lieutenant in 1814 and to first Lieutenant in 1816; served as regimental adjutant of the Fourth Infantry from September 7, 1816, to April 20, 1819, when he was promoted to captain; was promoted to major in 1838, and to colonel in 1846 for gallantry and meritorious conduct in the early phases of the Mexican War; resigned from the army on February 25, 1861, and died on February 21, 1872. (Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, I, 1046.)

evening or tomorrow by land, with a recruiting party, when they would return with the boat immediately to the landing abreast of the Fort.

Tuesday 13th At 3 PM, Mess'rs Hutton & Landreth return'd from Cedar creek, & reported, that yesterday at 1 PM they arrived at Col'l Philipses plan'on & after dinner proceeded to examine the lands, on which they found a large quantity of excellent Cedar, from 1 to 2½, & some 3 feet in diam'r at the but, & may be cut from 12 to 40 feet in length, & is generally very straight, & well adapted for Tops, & Stantions of any vessel, from a Schooner of War, to a Ship of the line; though from the feature of the last a good deal will be lost in moulding; 1st Futtocks for Schooners built on the Baltimore construction, that is to say sharp, straight Futtocks may likewise be form'd; This timber grows on hummocks on the different sections hereafter enumerated, but is so dispersed, that it is necessary to reserve the whole of them; The soil is tolerably good, intermix'd however, with a great deal of bad land, which is sandy and stony, the lands which are most esteem'd, have on the banks above them, large quantities of lime stone, such as is call'd at St Stephens rotten lime stone, which is here in abundance—

[p. 80] The general groth of timber, except on the hummocks which is all Cedar, consists of fine white oak, intermix'd with all the various species of the Quercus, (*Quercus sempervirens*, excepted) some Chestnut, & white,⁶¹⁷ & yellow pine; besides the Cedar now fit to cut, there is an infinite number of invaluable trees, or saplings, in a healthy & flourishing condition, which will be fit to cut by the time the large timber is expended, which will be a valuable acquisition to our Navy hereafter—

Mr Hutton estimates, that on each of the sections selected, there are about 2000 trees, of 1, 2 & 3 feet diameter, & from 15 to 40 feet in length. The 1st or smallest size, are generally in height, from the ground to the extreme top, from 30 to 40 feet, & many of the last or tallest from 60 to 80 feet, the whole of an excellent quality, hard & straight, with very little sap; In almost all of the sections reserv'd, there has been a good deal of the timber cut down; perhaps there are now laying cut 1000 trees of different dimensions, besides 4 or 500, which were cut by the Agent of Jacob Barker⁶¹⁸ of Newyork in 1816-17—for the purpose

⁶¹⁷ White pine, *Pinus strobus* L., is not recorded for Alabama by Mohr, Harper, or Sudworth.

⁶¹⁸ Jacob Barker, of New York, was a contractor for supplying pine timber to the United States Navy for ship construction. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 346.)

of shiping to Europe, a large quantity of which was stop'd at Mobile, where some of it is now laying exposed to the weather by which it is much injured & is not worth transportation

The Sections reserved are as follows: In Township No 7; Range 4 East are Sections 32, 33, 34 & fraction 29. In Township No 6 Range 4 East are Sections, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 & fraction 1, as per general survey & the Map thereof to which we refer—

Cedar Creek on Alabama River Fractions 1 & 29, has not any timber growing on them but it is necessary to reserve them to command a communication with the creek—

After having examined several other sections, on which no timber worthy attention was found; they took up their quarters for the night at Colonel Philipses house, who has clear'd about 150 Acres of public land on Section 32—

	Trees
On the 11 sections reserv'd is supposed to grow.....	22,000
But probably a fair calculation would be....	20,000)
Already cut including Jacob Barkers.....	1,500) ... 21,500
Besides a great number of young trees or saplings, which is sufficient for the supply of the Navy for several years—	

This morning they resumed their research, & not finding any other timber worthy of reservation, they return'd to Claiborne; We immediately wrote to Israel Pikens Esq'r Register of the Land Office for the Eastern district of the Alabama territory, resident at St Stephens, informing him of the selection which we had made, & requesting him to postpone the Sale thereof, until the pleasure of the President was made known to him; we likewise wrote to Col'l Philips, on a presumption that he would contract with the Department, to cut & raft the timber down to Mobile, & if so disposed we requested him to correspond with the Navy Commissioners on the subject (vide Appendix A No 31, 32⁶¹⁹)

[p. 81] Cedar Creek which runs through almost every section, is a small rivulet about 12 yards wide, at its mouth, & from 6 to 8 yards, one mile from it, the general depth of water does not exceed 6 inches, in order to get cedar down to its mouth, one or two dams, can easily be erected, which will facilitate the operation of saw mills, its bed is of lime stone, & the current runs always out, but in very dry seasons, there is very little water in it—

⁶¹⁹ Reference is to the Appendix to this Journal.

It will not be necessary to haul any of the timber more than one mile to the Creek, or one of its branches of which there are several—the ground is rather uneven, but two pair of good oxen, would haul two or three of the largest logs easily, & might make 8 or 10 loads in a summers day with ease; Colonel Philips who contracted with Jacob Barker in 1816 receiv'd 150 Cents per log of 12 feet long, & of every dimension down to 6 inches, deliver'd at the mouth of the Creek; this is certainly an extravagant price, & we think it can be done much cheaper, but we would recommend the Commissioners, to employ a superintendent & hewers, as little or no dependance can be placed in Contractors in cases of emergency, & the work would be done much better, more reasonable, & under their immediate control—There are several settlements on those public lands, & a great competition is expected amongst the settlers when this land is sold, as none will wish to move off the land they have clear'd, no doubt it will be sold for much more than its intrinsic value, as pique, & passion, will tend to enhance the price, independent of which land is very much over rated—

Wednesday 14th Understanding from Lieu't Wilson, that permission must be obtain'd from Col'l King,⁶²⁰ who commands at Forts Montgomery & Mims,⁶²¹ for the boat to take us to Mobile, which would take up much time we declined going in her, & determined to wait for the Bull dog—provided none other offer'd in the intermediate time—

Thursday 15th We found a Keel boat at the lower landing, on the point of departure for Mobile, in which we took passage, just after we embark'd a boat arrived, by which we were inform'd that the Bull dog was about 15 miles below us, we departed at 2.30 PM, as we knew that had we waited for her arrival, we would be detain'd, one or two days on various pretences; at 4 PM the Bull dog hove in sight, on which we embark'd, & turn'd her head the other way, & glided down the stream on the bosom of the Alabama, at the rate of 6 knots an hour; at 5, we came too, to refresh the people, & give them some rest, as they seem'd fatigued—

⁶²⁰ Probably William King, a native of Delaware, who entered the army as a second lieutenant in 1808, became first lieutenant in 1810, was regimental adjutant from March, 1811, to July 2, 1812, when he was promoted to captain; was promoted to major in 1813, and to colonel in 1814; became colonel of the Fourth Infantry on May 17, 1815, was honorably discharged from the army on June 1, 1821, and died on January 1, 1826. (Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, I, 600.)

⁶²¹ Fort Mims was located on the Alabama River, in modern Baldwin County, Alabama, about two miles overland from Fort Montgomery. It was the scene of the massacre of August 30, 1813. (Owen, *History of Alabama*, I, 611, 615.)

Friday 16th From the time we got underway until we came too for the night, we run 45 miles without any remarkable occurrence—

Saturday 17th We got underway at 2 AM & proceeded down the river, at 10 AM we enter'd the river Mobile, at 8h.30' PM, came too, for the night nothing worthy of notice having occur'd during the day—

[p. 82] *Sunday 18th* We arrived at the town of Mobile at 11 AM, heartily tired & very sick, & went onshore to purchase provisions for our voyage home; We were pleas'd however, that our excursion had answer'd the expectations of government, having found a sufficient quantity of good Cedar to serve our naval purposes for some years, & stop'd the sale of it, in less than three months from the date of the Navy Commissioners order to inspect the lands, had we been one week later, it would inevitably have been sold, & either lost to the nation altogether, or would have had to be repurchased at an exorbitant price—

On our arrival, we found the villain who had murder'd his father on the Cahaba⁶²² in prison well guarded, & most undoubtedly will be hung, the miscreant deserves to be impaled or burn'd alive—

Monday 19th We remain'd in town all day making preparations for our departure, I was very sick, emit'd a vast quantity of bile, & became very weak, the weather was very cold with the wind at North, until noon, when it shifted to West & was pleasant, those sudden changes impairs the constitution very much, & causes great mortality, especially amongst the lower classes of society—

Tuesday 20th At 9 AM we embark'd on board the Bull dog with Mr Shields⁶²³ a Purser of the Navy station'd at New Orleans, to where he is going after we embark on board the Nonsuch, now laying off Dog river,⁶²⁴ about 10 miles from town; the wind was dead on end, & we had to beat down with a very fresh breeze, & heavy sea, which wet us all over, at 4h.30' PM we arrived alongside the Nonsuch, when Capt'n Claxton immedi-

⁶²² Cahawba, a tributary of the Alabama River.

⁶²³ Thomas Shields, a native of Delaware, entered the navy as a midshipman in 1805, was commissioned as Purser on April 25, 1812, being stationed at New Orleans after 1814. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 153, 257, 302, 348, 368, 594, 905, 922; *ibid.*, *Miscellaneous*, II, 339.)

⁶²⁴ South of Mobile on the Bay. (See footnote 548, above)

ately gave orders to get underway, & to proceed down to Mobile point; Mr Shields remain'd onboard all night; he is a very pleasant man, but I was too sick to enjoy his conversation—

Wednesday 21st Mr Shields embark'd on board the Bull dog bound to N Orleans & here ends our duties of inspection, & Survey, for this season; & without vanity we may say, that we have seen as much hard, actual service to as much advantage, & have traversed as great a space of land & water, as any man employ'd by government for a number of years—I was much worse to day, in consequence of taking some Lees pills,⁶²⁵ which

At Anchor

Lat'd Obs'd $31^{\circ}, 11' N$
Long'e in $87^{\circ}, 22' W$

before they operated gave me so severe a cholic that I fainted; the quantity of bile which I emitted is really incredible, I do not believe that I would have survived another week, had I remain'd at Mobile, where no attendance could be procured—

Thursday 22nd Got underway in the Nonsuch at daylight, & pass'd over the Bar at 6h.45' AM; Course over SSE wind East, a steady breeze with all sail set—

The marks to go over Mobile bar, are to keep Mobile point bearing North, & Dogpoint NNW, & steer out SSE⁶²⁶ when you **Mobile Bar** will cross it in a quarter less 3 fathom water, when just over, you will deepen to 5 fathoms [p. 83] and the next throw of the lead if making fresh way through the water you will have 7 fathoms, hard sandy bottom when you will be all clear. The Bar is $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the shore, runs E to W $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles & is only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile across, hard sandy bottom mix'd with shells—Was there sufficient water in this Bay, it would be one of the finest in the world, & would in time have a fine back country to support its commerce—by the Tombeckbéé & Alabama rivers; but as it is, Pensacola is destined by providence to be the Emporium of this trade; Mobile will never be of much more importance than it is at present, owing to its want of depth of water, for vessels drawing more than 8 feet, & its low unhealthy situation, to which may be added the sterility of the soil in its vicinity—⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ "Dr. Lee's Patent New London Bilious Pills" were a well-known remedy widely used at that period. The advertisements stated that "for 18 years [they] have been approved by the public, and acquired a celebrity beyond that of any other American Patent Medicine." But at the time Cathcart was writing, "Sam'l. H. P. Lee, sole Patentee and sole Preparer", of New London, Connecticut, was warning the public against a "spurious imitation by the notorious T. W. Dyott of Philadelphia." (Advertisement in the Washington, D. C., *National Intelligencer*, March 4, 1819.) Mr. Cathcart may have been trying the "spurious imitation".

⁶²⁶ Apparently not the present main ship channel.

⁶²⁷ Mobile may not have realized her potentialities, but she has gone much farther than Pensacola, in spite of Cathcart's predictions.

To enable Pensacola to engross the trade of the Alabama territory with advantage, it will be necessary to join the River Escambia whose confluence is in the Coencuh river, & which runs **Pensacola** into the Bay of Pensacola, to the Creeks, which run from the Alabama river, between the 31° & 32° of North Latitude; the distance is but a few miles; from the Alabama, to the Tombeckbeé, there is a navigable Creek already described in Page 71 of this Journal; this would make the distance from the falls of the Black warrior, by the Tombeckbeé; & the whole of the Alabama river, not more, & from many places less, than from the same places, to the town of Mobile, & the superiority which from its local situation, & depth of water, it possesses over the latter, & indeed over every other harbour south of the Chesapeak, not excepting New Orleans, for a deposit for foreign commerce, will render it a place of great importance—This will be the work of time, it opens a vast field for the enterprise of an industrious population, which I hope it will soon have, & under the fostering care of a mild & benignant government, which it will soon enjoy,⁶²⁸ it must rapidly increase in wealth, & resources, & at no distant period will flourish in proportion to its numbers, equal to any City in the United States—
[p. 84] *Extract of a Journal from Mobile towards Baltimore, kept onboard the United States Schooner Nonsuch Alex'r Claxton Esq'r Commander*

Thursday April 22nd Got underway with a fine breeze at East, & 6h.45' AM cross'd the Bar, & made sail— The SW shoal of the Tortugas bears S, $37^{\circ} 34'$, E dist'ce 393 miles At Meridian commenced the Nautical day—

Course S 22, E: Dist: 22: Lat'd Obs'd $29^{\circ} 49'$ N, Long'e in $87^{\circ} 20'$ W: E to ESE Winds

Friday 23rd Light airs at SE at 6 PM fresh gales, at 8 Thunder & lightning

C: S 72° E: Dist: 46; Lat'd Obs'd $29^{\circ} : 37'$ N; Long'e in $87^{\circ}, 30'$ W; Pensacola N'th 47 miles

Saturday 24th Light airs in the SE quarter, at 2 PM, fresh gales from SE, with heavy thunder lightning & rain, the wind shifted all round the compass, & blew so hard in squalls, as to reduce us to bare poles, at 1 AM moderated—

⁶²⁸ The treaty by which the United States gained possession of the Floridas was under negotiation while Cathcart was on his tour of inspection. However, his high hopes for the future commercial importance of Pensacola have not been realized.

C S 70° E: Dist: 37: No obs'on by acc't 29°, 24': Long'e in 86°, 51' W: Variable

Sunday 25th Light airs from SW, at 6 PM, heavy rain, with tremendous claps of thunder & vivid lightning, which illuminated the whole horizon, with heavy squalls in different directions—The SW shoal of Tortugas⁶²⁹ bore S 29°, 5' E Dist: 320 miles
Moro Castle Havanna C S 68° E: Dist: 54: Lat'd Obs'd 29°: S 29° 30' E: 406 Miles 4' N: Long'e in 85°, 54' W, Squally & variable

Monday 26th Light airs from S to SW; at 11 AM saw the coast of Florida at 7 lea's dist'ce sounded & found no bottom with 80 fathoms of line out—C S 34 E: Dist. 75: Lat'd Obs'd 28°, 02' N: Long'e in 85°, 06' W: var'e SW to SE by S

Tuesday 27th Calm hazey weather at 6 PM saw the land on the Coast of Florida bearing NE, no bottom with 80 fathoms of line out—S 30° E: Dist: 42: Lat'd Obs'd 27°, 28' N: Long'e in 84°, 57' W: SSE to SE & Calm

Wednesday 28th Light airs & pleasant weather all sail set—C S 25° E: Dist: 27: Lat'd Obs'd 27°, 09' N: Long'e in 84°, 48' W: SE to S by W.

Thursday 29th Moderate breezes at SE, & pleas't wea'r with a heavy swell from SSE—C S 40° W: Dist: 98: Lat'd Obs'd 25°, 33' N: Long'e in 84°, 55' W: SE—

Friday 30th Light breezes & pleas't wea'r with a strong cur't runing SSE which causes a heavy swell, at 9 PM carried away our weather toping lift—C S 11° E: Dist, 94: Lat'd Obs'd 24°, 01' N: Long'e in 84°, 35' W: E to SE—

Saturday the 1st of May 1819 Moderate breezes in the SE quarter, & pleasant weather. The SW shoal of Tortugas, bears N 77° E, dist'ce 107 miles, and Moro Castle Havana S 67° E distance 133 miles—C, S 73° E: Dist, 47: Lat'd Obs'd 24°, 14' N: Long'e in 83°, 40': SE—

Sunday 2nd Moderate breezes & pleas't weather, middle & latter part fresh breezes at ESE, sounded & found no bottom with 110 fathoms of line out—C S 87° E: Dist, 50: Lat'd Obs'd 24°, 11' N: Long'e in 82°, 46' W: ESE—

Monday 3rd First part light airs & pleas't weather, sounded at Meridian and got bottom in 13 fathoms, with grey sand, no land

being insight from the Fore topsail yard, which induces me to believe that we are off the sandy bay 10 or 12 miles to the Eastward of the Tortugas—C: N 86° E: Dist, 55: Lat'd Obs'd 24°, 16' N: Long'e in 81°, 17' W: E to ESE—

[p. 85] *Tuesday 4th* First part moderate, middle part fresh breezes with a heavy swell the current set the last 24 hours NE 22 miles, saw a sail on the weather bow beating to windward as we were— C S 85° E: Dist, 33: Lat'd Obs'd 24° 13' Long'e in 81°, 13' W— Variable—

Wednesday 5th Light airs & pleas't wea'r Spoke the Schooner Arringdon of Gardiner,⁶³⁰ 12 days from New Orleans bound to Port au Prince,⁶³¹ she made Matanzas⁶³² yesterday, & calculates that the double headed shot keys, bears from us S by E, dist, 40 miles; all vessels bound through the Gulf of Florida—if they do not make the Tortugas, should run to the Southward until they make some high, known, land on the Island of Cuba, & from thence shape their course, as the cur't sets in various directions at different [places] by which they may easily be deceiv'd, we allow'd for the current for the last 24 hours; 42 miles NNE— C N 31° E: Dist, 96: Lat'd Obs'd 25°, 35' N, Long'e in 80°, 19' W. E to NE

Thursday 6th Fresh breezes and pleasant wea'r at Mer'n sounded in 25 fathom sandy bottom, at 4 PM made the land on the Florida shore bearing W by S, at 6 PM wore ship having a very heavy swell, latter part moderate C N 2° E: Dist: 124: Lat'd Obs'd 27°, 38' N: Long'e in 80°, 16' W: NE—

Friday 7th Light airs & pleas't weather, beating to windward, at 10 PM the wind came round to the SE, set square & steering sails, this is the first fair wind we have had, since we have left Mobile, allow'd for the cur't in this days work 57 miles NNE—C N 25° E: Dist, 152: Lat'd Obs'd 29°, 55': Long'e in 79°, 01' W: NE: SE: SW—

Saturday 8th Clear & pleas't weather, discover'd a sail, on our lee beam standing to the Westward, at 3 PM a squall from the NE'd struck us, shorten'd sail & sent down topgal't & yard & housed the mast in consequence of a heavy swell from the NEastward—

⁶³⁰ Probably Gardiner, Maine, her home port.

⁶³¹ Island of Hayti.

⁶³² Island of Cuba.

Bearings & distance at Meridian—

Cape Hatteras bears	N 31° E	dist'ce	212	miles
Extreme shoal of do	N 34° E	"	206	do
Cape Henry from ext'e shoal	N 22°, 25' W	"	113	do
Cape Lookout, ext'e shoal	N 24° E	"	141½	do
Cape Henry from C'e Hatteras	N 22°, 15' W	"	113	do
From Ship to extreme shoal of Cape Hatteras	N 34° E	"	206	do
From Extreme shoal of Cape Hatteras to Cape Henry	N 22°, 25' W:	"	124	do
From Ship to Cape Henry			330	miles

The Latitude by account agreeing with the Latitude by Observation no allowance is made for current, & I am induced to believe that we are to the Eastward of the Gulf stream— C N 28° E: Dist, 152: Lat'd Obs'd 32°, 12' N, Long'e in 77°, 40' W, Variable & squally

Sunday 9th Light airs in SE quarter, from midnight to 4 AM variable & squally with rain & thunder & lightning at 6 PM the temperature of the air was 76°—water 77°, at Mer'n 72°, water 78°— light airs & pleasant weather— C N 37° E: Dist, 147: Lat'd Obs'd 34°, 09' N: Long'e in 75°, 54' W : N to ENE—

[p. 86] *Monday 10th* Light airs & pleas't weather, wind SE by E, at 3 PM the wind hauld to the westward, accompanied with heavy rain thunder & lightning, which lasted nearly all night, during which the electric fluid stream'd down our conductor & next to divine providence saved the vessel, at 8 AM it clear'd up & to Mer'n was pleasant & clear with light airs to the NE. Air & water 76°—

At Meridian sounded in 30 fathom water in sight of Cape Hatteras, a man fell overboard (Reynolds) while hooking the Fore sheet outside a most dangerous & useless practice when beating to windward, but was saved by the exertions of Mr Temple⁶³³ the first Lieutenant & two men in a small boat although the sea was very high; two sail in sight— C N 4° E: Dist, 42: Lat'd Obs'd 34°, 43' N: Long'e in 75°, 51' W: SE: NW: SW.

Tuesday 11th Fresh gales & pleas't weather, three sail insight; at 4h.25' PM David Hammond⁶³⁴ fell overboard from the end of the Main boom, every exertion was made to save him by

⁶³³ William Temple, a native of Vermont, was a lieutenant on the *Nonesuch*. In 1818 he had been in command of the schooner *Despatch*. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 592, 631.)

⁶³⁴ No further information is available on this individual.

Mr Byrnes⁶³⁵ the 2nd Lieutenant, in a leaky gig, with two men, but the sea run very high, & he sunk poor fellow never to rise again in this world, the boat was half full of water, & the people in her were in imminent danger of being lost, I was extremely unhappy until the[y] got safe onboard again. From midnight to 8 AM variable with heavy squalls from SE to SW, & round to NW accompanied with heavy gales, at 10 AM hove too under a double reef'd Foresail; Temperature of the air 62° & of the water 74 which induces me to believe that we are in the Gulf stream. C N 31° E: Dist 61: Lat'd by Acc't 35°, 24' N: Long'e in 75°, 13': Variable

Wednesday 12th Heavy gales & rainy weather, laying too, through out the night the gale continued with a tremendous sea; Air 58°, water 56° & very cold—C S 89 W: Dist, 19: Lat'd by Acc't 35°, 25' N: Long'e in 75°, 39' W: NE quarter

Thursday 13th The Gale continued with increasing violence & cloudy weather, with a dangerous cross sea running, at 12h. 30' set the balanc'd Main sail, to keep the vessels head to the sea, wind at North veering two or three points with heavy squalls, through the night the gale was very violent; at 6 AM we saw two sail to windward, laying too on the opposite tack: Temp'e of Air 57°, water 49° being within the Gulf stream From 8 to Meridian heavy gales & high sea, sounded in 60 fathom sandy bottom, close to Cape Hatteras shoal; saw the Frigate United States⁶³⁶ from the Mediterranean carrying a press of Sail on the opposite tack to clear the Shoal, she fired a gun, & hoisted her number, but as we had none, we answer'd it with 73 ?Are you American;— C S 37 W: Dist, 24: Lat'd by Acc't 35°, 12' N: Long'e in 75°, 56' W: NE, to NW.

Friday 14th Heavy gales, & tremendeous Sea, sounded in 55 fathom water, & in the first lull, wore round on the other tack, the wind coming round with us to NW, enabled to lay up NNE, & head the sea, which was very fortunate, as the sea was very dangerous in so small a vessel—

[p. 87] At 7 PM we carried away our tiller in the rudder head, in the intermediate time while another was fitting, we found

⁶³⁵ Edmund Byrne, a native of Pennsylvania, may have been acting as second lieutenant on the *Nonesuch* in 1819, though he is listed in the records as only a midshipman. He entered the navy as a midshipman on February 1, 1814, and was listed among the "midshipman passed for promotion" in 1821; but his actual promotion to the rank of lieutenant did not occur until January 13, 1825. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 595, 634, 704, 751, 858, 922, 1082.)

⁶³⁶ The *United States*, which was commissioned and put into service early in 1799, was rated as a First Class Frigate, mounting 44 guns and carrying a crew of 395 officers and men. In 1819 she was commanded by Captain William M. Orane, with Charles S. McCauley, Uriah P. Levy, James A. Perry and William Laughton as lieutenants. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 280, 469, 590, 591, 601, 712, 819.)

that the vessel lay too better & fell off less, than when the Quarter master attended the helm, & I am inform'd that most sharp vessels of this description will do the same— At 10 PM, it having blow'd tremendeously for half an hour at NW, positively equal to a hurricane, it moderated very quick, which exposed us to a tremendous sea, we let the reefs out of the Fore sail to steady the vessel, at midnight the sea had fallen considerably, light breezes & rainy weather, still laying too, waiting for the sea to fall; at 6 AM, the wind shifted to ESE, which gave us hopes that the gale was over, which had lasted without intermission for 54 hours, & for three days we had not been able to take an Altitude; this has certainly been the most extraordinary weather for the middle of May, that ever was known in these latitudes, steer'd North until Meridian— C N 42 E: Dist, 30: Lat'd Obs'd 36°, 01' N: Long'e in 75°, 31' W: N'th to ESE—

Saturday 15th Light breezes & foggy weather with a considerable swell Courses NW & NW by N, Wind in the NE quarter, between 2 & 3 AM sounded in 13 fath's hove too with our head off shore, at daylight made sail & to Meridian fired several guns for a Pilot it being a thick fog— C N 40° W: Dist 60: Lat'd by Acc't 36°, 47': Long'e in 76°, 19' W: Fog, varia'e

Sunday 16th Light airs & foggy weather made sail & steer'd in NE & NW by W— a Frigate & 30 sail in sight, Cape Henry⁶³⁷ at Meridian bore S by E 4 miles distance & here ends the nautical day, at 5 PM got a Pilot onboard, Course N by W, Willoughbys point W 1/2 S 10 miles distance At 1 PM the Frigate United States from the Mediterranean & Congress⁶³⁸ just out of Hampton roads anchor'd under the Cape Wind WNW. At 6 PM we was struck with a heavy squall, took in everything but the Fore sail, at 7.45 anchor'd on the head of the middle in 5 fathoms hard bottom; at 9 PM the fog clear'd away & we got underway again, the light on New point Comfort bearing NW by W 1/2 W, dist'ce 12 or 13 miles, haul'd up NW by N for half an hour to clear the middle, & then steer'd NNW in quarter less 7 fath's At 10 PM the light on New point Comfort was a beam of us 8 or 9 miles distance Courses N by W & N 1/2 W, with a fine breeze at W by N.

Monday 17th At 8 AM we were abreast of Barren Island Cape Look out, on the weather quarter, steering NW by N, at

⁶³⁷ At the entrance of Chesapeake Bay.

⁶³⁸ The *Congress*, which was commissioned and put into service in 1798, was rated as a Second Class Frigate, mounting 36 guns and carrying a crew of 328 officers and men. In 1819 she was commanded by Captain John D. Henley, with William H. Allen, Philip F. Voorhees, Thomas W. Wyman, Andrew Fitzhugh, John H. Lee and John M. Dale as lieutenants. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 280, 469, 590-592, 601, 712, 819.)

9 AM pass'd the cliffs of Patuxent, this river is bold on both sides & affords a good harbour in NE gales, at 12h.20' were abreast of Plumb point, at 1h.40' PM Annapolis Spire bore NW by W 1/2 W, dist'ce 12 miles, steering N by W— Fresh gales & squally at WNW, all sail set; shoald to 5 fathoms, kept off NNE for 10' & then hauld up North, at 3h.30' PM passing Annapolis, was struck [p. 88] with a very heavy squall, took in all Sail; At 7 PM blowing very hear at West, Anchor'd about 6 miles East of North point, & two minutes afterwards was struck with the heaviest squall I ever experienc'd, which continued to blow for a considerable time a perfect hurricane, all hands could not brail up the Foresail, to hand it aloft, & we were obliged to lower the gaff down on deck, & to let go a second anchor it blew a continual gale all night at WNW, dead a head, with heavy squalls & very cold for the season, which is certainly a most uncommon one—

Tuesday 18th Got underway at Sunrise & beat up until North point bore NE dist'ce 3 miles, when we were obliged to anchor again, it blowing very hard at W by N with heavy squalls, got underway again, but was obliged to anchor immediately, as the vessel is so crank,⁶³⁹ that it is dangerous to carry sail on her; her spars ought to be reduced, in their present state, they are of sufficient dimensions for a vessel of four feet more beam than the Nonsuch; she is a very dangerous vessel—

At 4 PM the gale moderated, & the wind became variable, which enabled us to beat up to Fells point, where we arrived at 7 PM disembark'd with out baggage & took up quarters at Gadsby's Hotel⁶⁴⁰ Baltimore at 9 PM, after having experienced a very boisterous & dangerous passage, with continual head winds, from the time we left Mobile until we arrived at Fells point, during the twenty six days & a half that we were out, we had only about thirty hours fair wind the whole time—

Wednesday 19th Left Baltimore in the Stage at 5 AM, at Meridian was at the Capitol⁶⁴¹ & at 1 PM arrived at home after an absence of six months, during which we experienced many deprivations & much hard service, & traversed a considerable extent of Territory—

Thursday 20th We waited on the Navy Commissioners, but not finding them in the office, we call'd at the Navy Department, & conversed with Mr. Homans,⁶⁴² the Secretary of the Navy being absent—

⁶³⁹ A nautical adjective, meaning "very easily inclined by an external force, as that of the wind on the sails."

⁶⁴⁰ A well-known hostelry of those days.

⁶⁴¹ In Washington, D. C.

⁶⁴² Benjamin Homans, who was for many years the secretary or clerk to the Commissioners of the Navy Pension Fund, a position comparable to that of Assistant Secretary of the Navy today. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 393, 537-579, 743-744.)

Friday 21st of May 1819 In consequence of the Secretary of the Navy being absent we wrote a letter to him announcing our arrival, & gave him a short description of the rout we had pursued, promising him a report in detail with Maps in due season; And here we conclude our Journal which commenced November the 18th 1819⁶⁴³ [sic]—

James Leander Cathcart—
James Hutton

[p. 89] Schedule of the Classes and divisions of timber for First Rates and Seventy four gun Ships, including all the intermediate rates, with Frigates, & Sloops of War, occasionally refer'd to in the preceding Journal, and Recapitulation—

	First Rates &c	Floor timbers, Knight heads, & Hause pieces, Stem & Apron, Stern post, Forward & after dead wood —2nd & 3rd Transoms—
1st Class	Frigates	Stem, Apron, Stern post, Wing & 2nd Transom Forward dead wood—
	Rates	1st & 2nd Futtocks, Aft & forward, 4th & 5th Transoms—Breast hooks, Transom knees—
2nd Class	Frigates	3rd & 4th Transoms & Knees, Floors, Knight heads & Hause pieces—
	Sloops Rates &c	Stem, Apron, Stern post and Wing Transom 2nd & 3rd Futtocks, Counter & promiscuous timber—
3rd Class	Frigates	1st Futtock & Breast hook—
	Sloops	2nd & 3rd Transoms KH & HP, dead wood, Transom knees.
4th Class	1st Rates &c	4th & 5th Futtocks—
	Frigates	2nd do
	Sloops	1st do
5th Class	Rates	Top timbers & Stantions
	Frigates	3rd and 4th Futtocks, Tops, & Stantions—
	Sloops	2nd & 3rd Futtocks—
6th Class	Sloops	Top timbers & Stantions, with the smallest promiscuous timber admissible in all—
	Note	Wing Transoms for Line of Battle Ships, are consider'd exclusively on account of their magnitude—

⁶⁴³ Should be 1818; an easy error to make, as the dates preceding this one had been 1819.

[P. 90] Table of the contents of the accompanying Map of the lands upon Cedar Creek in the Territory of Alabama including those reserved—

Township	S	Acre	S	Acre	S	Acre	S	Acre	Notes—
5 Range	1	640.00	13	540.00	25	590.50	The estimated contents of the fractional sections on the river are set down in them		
	2	629.20	14	629.20	26	635.20			
	3	633.40	15	633.40	27	634.40			
	4	634.50	16	634.50	28	633.60			
	5	686.00	17	—	—	29	634.80		
	6	700.18	18	—	—	30	640.00		
	7	640.00	19	—	—	31	640.00		
	8	—	20	633.00	32	638.00			
	9	—	21	634.50	33	636.40			
	10	—	22	633.60	34	637.20			
	11	—	23	634.40	35	637.20			
	12	—	24	591.00	36	594.00			
6 Township	1	Res'd	—	13	629.60	25	632.00		
	2	Res'd	624.40	14	631.60	26	628.50		
	3	Res'd	641.00	15	640.80	27	639.40		
	4	Res'd	642.00	16	636.40	28	638.80		
	5	Res'd	634.40	17	636.40	29	634.80		
	6	—	635.00	18	634.80	30	629.20		
	7	—	636.00	19	632.00	31	634.80		
	8	—	637.80	20	634.80	32	637.60		
	9	Res'd	637.20	21	636.80	33	640.00		
	10	Res'd	642.40	22	638.60	34	640.40		
	11	Res'd	632.00	23	630.00	35	634.00		
	12	Res'd	621.60	24	628.00	36	638.80		
7 Township	1	612.00	13	639.00	25	628.80			
	2	640.00	14	637.00	26	638.00			
	3	640.00	15	637.00	27	640.00			
	4	640.00	16	456.00	28	642.40			
	5	200.00	17	—	—	29	611.00		
	6	—	18	—	—	30	24.00		
	7	—	19	—	—	31	478.00		
	8	300.00	20	200.00	32	641.30			
	9	639.00	21	639.00	33	640.80			
	10	635.60	22	639.00	34	640.00			
	11	639.00	23	637.00	35	639.20			
	12	642.00	24	633.60	36	632.00			
Reserv'd Acres—									2533.10

Sign'd And'w Henshaw
Dep: Surveyor

Sign'd Tho's Rhodes
Dep: Surveyor

Reserv'd

Reserv'd
Reserv'd
Reserv'd

Reserv'd Acres—

[p. 92] *Recapitulation of, and Reference to, the contents
of the preceding Journal*

On perusing the preceding Journal, & report, it will be found, That on the Mississippi, from the Belize, to the Bayou or river Plaquemines a distance of 222 miles (with the exception of the Hermitage⁶⁴⁴ on the West side, & Fort Darby⁶⁴⁵ on the East side, which is hereafter described) the small quantity of live oak which grows on, or near, its margin is all private property, & if it was not, it is of so bad a quality & so dispersed that it is entirely unworthy the attention of government—

From Plaquemines to the Teche, by the Lakes, & Reeds Creek, there is not one live oak tree worth cutting, & very few of any description, except those which grow on the Navy Commissioners Islands, which merits a particular description—

From Renthrops ferry at the mouth of the Teche, to the town of St Martinsville a distance of 92 miles, there is only one clump of live oak of any importance, which is private property, which may be purchased, it is situated between Renthrops ferry & Reeds creek; on the whole extent of the Teche there are several good trees, all of which is so much dispersed that it is not worth the **Journal, Page 47—** attention of government, especially as it is all private property—

The timber of Lake Pontchartrain, Maurepas, & Borgne, as well as on the River Tchifonte, & its vicinity, is of such a quality, **Appendix B** so dispers'd & so small in quantity, that it is unworthy attention, besides the land on which it **Nos 1, 2, 3, 4** grows, is private property, it has already been inspected particularly, by order of Com'e Paterson, whose report is conclusive—

Mr Hutton who has traversed this Section of the Country during a period of near three years residence, & who is a competent judge of the quality of timber fit for Naval purposes, makes the following report, which from corroborating circumstances appears to me to be perfectly correct—VIZ

*First*⁶⁴⁶—That on Gen'l Wade Hamptons plantation,⁶⁴⁷ the timber is inconsiderable, extended over a vast space, & of a

⁶⁴⁴ Lake Hermitage, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana.

⁶⁴⁵ At the outlet of Lake Lery, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana.

⁶⁴⁶ This and the succeeding similar headings are written in the margins in the original manuscript Journal.

⁶⁴⁷ Reference is probably to the Orange Grove plantation, located within the upper limits of New Orleans today. General Hampton also owned the Houmas plantation, located in Ascension Parish near the present village of Burnside; and Cathcart may have had reference to this plantation.

quality which would answer few Naval purposes, consequently not worth the attention of govern't,

Second—That on the Hermitage on the West side of the Mississippi there are about 300 trees, most of which are dead, or have some other defect, which renders them unworthy the attention of government; had they been of good quality, they could easily be transported through the canal which communicates with the Mississippi—

Third—Fort Darby, on the East side of the Mississippi, in whose vicinity there are about 300 fine trees, the major part of which are of the first class; this timber is claim'd by Mr Livingston, upon what ground is not known, & can easily be convey'd down Bayou [p. 93] Terre aux Boeufs, into Black lake,⁶⁴⁸ & through the pass or channel which runs into Chandeleur Bay, in vessels drawing three feet water, as in the pass there is only three & a half feet—

Fourth—From the Belize as far West as Cheniere au Caminada⁶⁴⁹ there is not a single live oak tree of any description, the main being a Marsh & the Islands Sand banks—Cheniere au Caminada contains about 300 trees of the smallest dimensions,⁶⁵⁰

**Cheniere au Caminada
see the Chart**

Note: These three Caminadas are claim'd by a certain Joseph Cher Ami, his title is disputed by Derbane. Cher Ami offer'd Mr Livingston all the timber growing on them, if he would support his claim, public opinion says, that neither have the shadow of a right to them, & that they are the property of the United States

fit only for Sloops of war, with few exceptions; This timber may be ship'd on Caminada Bay, in which is 4 feet water & more than 10 feet of soft mud, & carried through the channel, which runs between Grand & Mondiant Isles,⁶⁵¹ carrying the same depth of water, & from thence through the Grand pass at the mouth of Barataria Bay, which lays between the points of Grand Isle, & Grand Terre, on the Bar of which is generally 7 feet water, on passing which you will be in the deep Bay which lays between the West pass of the

Mississippi & the mouth of Lafourche river—

⁶⁴⁸ Black Bay.

⁶⁴⁹ On the mainland across from Grand Isle.

⁶⁵⁰ There are no live oaks today on Cheniere au Caminada, although there are small live oak stumps along the road to Grand Isle. Cathcart seems to have omitted mention of live oak on Grand Isle, which is of interest in view of the moderate size trees present today.

⁶⁵¹ Now Mendicant Island.

Cheniere au Laurier Blanc⁶⁵² is divided from Cheniere au
Chenier au Laurier Blanc Caminada, by a marsh 300 yards wide, & contains about 180 trees of the above description—

Cheniere petite belle Vieu is divided from Cheniere au Laurier blanc, by a marsh of a quarter of a mile wide, & contains about 120 trees of the same description— The last mention'd

Cheniere petite belle Vieu
Claim'd by Cher Ami &
Derbane supposed to be the
property of the United States Cheniers, lay in a WNW direction from Cheniere au Caminada, at the above mention'd distances— The transportation of the timber from the two last mention'd Cheniers,

must be to the head of the Lake des Islets,⁶⁵³ in which is only two & a half feet water, thence through the pass which lays between the East end of Chenier au Caminada, & West end of Mondiant Isle, into Caminada bay, & from thence by the same rout as the timber from Cheniere au Caminada—

From the Saut,⁶⁵⁴ or Jump, which is situated between the SW point, of Grand Isle, & Cheniere au Caminada, in the pass of which

La Saut or Jump into Caminada bay in six feet water, and is
(Vide) Journal: fifteen miles from the centre of the Bar of
p's 37 to 46 Lafourche⁶⁵⁵ (notwithstanding Darby makes it but five) through Timballier bay, the Main is a continued Marsh, & the Islands barren sand & marsh, as far as Petite Caillou— For a description of the Coast from that to Belle Isle & the coast to the westward of it we refer to the accompanying Journal—

It appears to us, that Darby has never been upon this Coast from his numerous errors,⁶⁵⁶ amongst which, not the least, is his calling La Derniere Isle, Grand Caillou, when in relity it is situated to the NE of Isle aux Vins; the small Islands which he has laid down between them do not exist, no [p. 94] other Islands are known here but La Derniere, aux Vins Cat & Caillou; he must have mistaken gullys, or little inlets in the Marsh (if he has ever been on this Coast) for divisions of the Isle aux Vins, this we are induced to believe from our own observation, as well as from the information which we receiv'd from our Pilot & the Fishermen, who have been employ'd for many years in carrying fish from La Derniere Isle (or last Island West) to the New Orleans Market—

⁶⁵² Members of a group of oak bearing ridges or chenieres lying east of Bayou Moreau.

⁶⁵³ Bay des Islets.

⁶⁵⁴ Caminada Pass.

⁶⁵⁵ Cathcart is right.

⁶⁵⁶ Again, Cathcart is right.

From Lafourche there runs off a point,⁶⁵⁷ or hard sand bank, for at least 30 miles into the Gulf of Mexico, it is very dangerous, **Lafourche Point or Bank** & many vessels have been lost on it; great care ought to be taken in running along this Coast to give it a good birth—

The foregoing includes a description of the Coast from the Belize to Point au Fer, so far as relates to Live Oak timber; **(Vide) Journal Page 64** Cheniere au Tigre, & the MermenTau & Appendix A no 13 is as yet unexplored, on which it is said exists some fine live oak trees, they are the only places which we have not inspected on this Coast; nor can they be inspected, unless a vessel is built on purpose for that service, which should our last Treaty with Spain be ratified⁶⁵⁸ may be employ'd as far as the Sabine, as Doctor Sibly & Mr Davenport⁶⁵⁹ inform'd us, that live oak of a good quality grows both upon that, & the Trinity rivers, she would likewise be serviceable in detecting Smugglers, & in exploring the Coast of East Florida when it becomes an appendage of the United States⁶⁶⁰—

Deer Island Deer Island is the property of the United States, contains a ridge of 100 live oak trees, from 3 to 5 feet in diam'r but is surrounded with Marsh which would render the transportation of timber so difficult & expensive, that it is unworthy the attention of gov't

Plumb Isl'd Jour'l P'e 36 Plumb Island is likewise the property of the United States, it is easy of access & contains 40 to 50 Live Oak trees, 2½ feet in diam'r and about 300 saplings, & is hardly worthy notice—

Belle Isle Is claim'd by Dr Bruissier of Kentucky & litigated by three Frenchmen in virtue of a claim granted by the Spanish governor

vide Journal pag's 46 & 56 Miro dated May 2nd 1783, it is well worthy the attention of Government & it is believ'd may be purchased for land in any other section of Louisiana, or a moderate sum of money, it is easy of

⁶⁵⁷ Excellent modern maps fail to show such a feature.

⁶⁵⁸ By this treaty, which was not finally ratified until 1821, the United States acquired undisputed possession of both East and West Florida but gave up all claim to Texas, the western boundary of the United States being fixed at the Sabine River as far up as the 32nd parallel.

⁶⁵⁹ Dr. John Sibley and Samuel Davenport. See footnotes 523 and 525, above.

⁶⁶⁰ The treaty by which the United States acquired the Floridas was then awaiting ratification by Spain.

access, it contains more than 2000 live Oak trees fit for naval purposes, besides a young groth of trees in rapid progression, & the timber may be taken to vessels by Point au Fer; which however cannot approach that point, nearer than 12 miles with safety, if they draw more than 6 or 7 feet water when loaded—

Lemuel Paris claims this Island,⁶⁶¹ but is supposed to have no right whatever to it, he has been settled on it about three years, but has [p. 95] clear'd but a very small portion of the land, it is easy of access & contains some fine timber (live oak) consequently the claim is worth the trouble of investigation by government—

This is a valuable Island,⁶⁶² the Bryants are settled on it & claims one mile square, by what grant we do not know, it contains more Live Oak; & of a better quality, than any other Island which we have inspected, the remainder of the Island, is the property of the United States; if the Bryants have a legal claim to the land they are settled on, it is probable that they would exchange it for lands else where, or dispose of it for a reasonable sum in cash, which if attainable, would be a valuable acquisition to the United States—

Mr Rice claims this Island⁶⁶³ by inheritance, from his father, Rices Island no live oak of any consequence grows on it—
Journal P'e 31

Cowpen Island⁶⁶⁴ is likewise claim'd by Mr Rice, but it is not known by what title, it does not produce live oak of any consequence but its value may be a consideration worthy of the attention of gov't

This Island⁶⁶⁵ is divided by a bayou, on the NW end of which, where Garrett Taylor lives, Mr Boles claims one mile square, but by what title is not known, there are several plantations on it, whose possessors, are said to have no title to the lands, they have settled on,

⁶⁶¹ Now Beers Island.

⁶⁶² Tiger Island.

⁶⁶³ Now Bateman Island.

⁶⁶⁴ Now Avoca Island.

⁶⁶⁵ So-called Lafourche Island.

except what they have derived from actual settlement which at most can only amount to the right of pre-emption—

Should government think proper to investigate the claims & titles by which the Islands & land in general is held in this vicinity, it is our opinion, that they would be amply repaid for

This inform'on is corroborated by inform'on we receiv'd at Franklin and all along this Coast—which is very apparent in the information contain'd in the preceding Journal—

the expense & trouble of investigation, provided those employ'd were superior to corruption, & not residents in this State, for the titles by which land is held in general (with few exceptions) are so equivocal that a person settled here, however honest, would naturally

be partial to those with whom he was in the habits of intimacy, especially where the United States is concern'd which in this Section of the Country is consider'd fair game; their being sensible that the legality of their claims could not be substantiated on fair principles, occasion'd their great jealousy of us, as they suspected that we were collecting information for government relative to those claims in general, that this was the case is manifested in the contents of this Journal—

A (From this to B on the next page contains a description of the parts selected for Naval purposes by the President of the United States)^{***}

The Navy Commissioners Islands situated in Lake Chetimaches are the property of the United States supposed to contain

**Navy Commissioners Islands—
Journal Pages: 25 & 26** 900 to 1000 Acres, 800 Acres are estimated to produce 5 good live

oak trees from 3 to 5 feet in diameter per Acre, may be more, they are easy of access, & the timber may either be transported by Reeds Creek [p. 96] down the Teche & Atchafalaya to the Gulf of Mexico by Point au Fer, where vessels must lay at the distance of 12 miles off in the open sea to receive it, or by clearing the Rafts on Bayou Sorel, open a com-

(Vide) Journal P's 58 to 63. munication to the Mississippi, which can be done by 20 men in a week with ease, & which is undoubtedly the best rout—

^{***} The words printed here in parentheses are inserted in small script between paragraphs in the original manuscript Journal.

Cypress Island⁶⁶⁷ & the Group of Six Islands contiguous to it with the exception of Islands No 3 & 4, which is a continued Forest of Cypress, contains a large quantity of fine live Oak fit to

**Cypress Island and Group
of six Isl'ds contiguous to
it—Vide Journal Page 17
to 22** cut, from three to 8, & some trees 9 feet in diameter, besides a fine groth of young timber of different dimensions; this Group may contain near 18,000 Acres, 14,000 of

which produce live oak, & if we calculate that they produce between 2 & 3 trees per acre only, in order to prevent the possibility of disappointing the expectations of government, we may, with propriety assert they contain 35,000 Live oak trees fit for every naval purpose; Those Islands are easy of access, have a sufficient draught of water in their Bayous or water courses, & is an excellent situation for a yard to mold the timber at, before it is transported to the different naval depots, where it may be required for immediate use; the transportation of timber from this group of Islands must be effected by the same rout, & conveyance as the timber from the Navy Commissioners Islands, already described—

B For the contents of the different Islands & places in Acres, which we have inspected, or may inspect, we invariably

Note— refer to the Surveyors report, in which the number of

Acres, in each spot, or Island ought to be calculated exactly, in order to ascertain with as much precision as is practicable, the number of trees on each Our calculations in general are limited, in order that the expectations of government may rather be surpass'd, than disappointed, & although sufficiently correct, we are unwilling to take an unnecessary responsibility upon ourselves, especially as it is the Surveyors duty to define the limits of each inspection, & he has had no other duty to perform—

Channels & water courses

By perusing the Journal to which this is annex'd, it will appear[r] that the depth of water in lake Chetimaches, from the

(Vide) Journal—

**Pages 15 to 32 & 58 to 62
The depth of water on every
Course is mark'd all through
the Journal—**

Commissioners, & Cypress Islands, both by the way of Reeds Creek, & Bayou Sorel, is from three feet, to eight fathoms, but we have reason to believe that there are channels more regular which run through

⁶⁶⁷ Northeastern side of Grand Lake.

the whole Lake,⁶⁶⁸ but we had not time to ascertain the facts; as it is, Flats, of considerable burthen may be employ'd in the transportat[ion] of timber, ideed while the timber is preparing, the channel may be ascertained, & regularly staked, or buoy'd off, at very little expen[se].

[p. 97] *Docter Sibleys and Mr Davenports report—*

On our return to New Orleans Dr John Sibley, & Mr Sam'l Davenport, both residents of Natchitoches, inform'd Mr Hutton

Vide Journal P'e 64
The Confluence of the Red river with the Mississ'i is in Lat'd 31°, 06' N—Long'e 91°, 44' W from Greenwich 16°, 37' W from Philadelphia⁶⁶⁹

& myself that on the Red River there were three or four Rafts, mostly composed of Red Cedar, the trees being from 18 inches to 3 feet in diameter and that the chief groth on its banks, from 100 yards to some miles distance was Red Cedar of various dimensions. Mr

Davenport declared that on the Sabine & Trinity rivers, & to the westward of them, there exists a considerable groth of Live Oak, & that the inhabitants made the truck wheels of their carts with that timber, some of which were from 3 to 4 feet in diameter—

Cedar Creek on Alabama River

On Cedar creek on the Alabama river is selected for reservation 11 Sections & 2 fractions of Sections, containing about 20,000 Red Cedar trees, of from 15 to 40 feet in length, & 1,

(Vide)—Journal P's 67 to 83 & accompany'g Map & Appendix A Nos 29, 30, 31, 32
 2 & 3 feet in diameter besides a fine groth of young trees, or saplings, & 1500 trees of different dimensions lying cut on the lands, for further particulars we refer to

our Journal to which this is annex'd—

East Florida

By all accounts, will furnish the Navy with a sufficient quantity of Live Oak, but it must first be ours,⁶⁷⁰ to make any reference to it at present would be premature—

⁶⁶⁸ Cathcart is right.

⁶⁶⁹ He is a little off on his location.

⁶⁷⁰ The treaty transferring the Floridas to the United States was not finally ratified by Spain until 1821.

Pensacola

To enable Pensacola when it becomes ours, to engross the trade of the Alabama territory with advantage, it will be necessary to join the rivers Escambia whose confluence is in the Coencuh river, & which runs into the bay of Pensacola, to the Creeks which run from the Alabama river between the 31° & 32° of North Latitude, the distance is but a few miles—

From the Alabama to the Tombeckbeé, there is a navigable creek already described in page 71 of this Journal, this would make the distance from the falls of the Black Warrior, by the Tombeckbeé, & the whole of the Alabama river; not more & in many places less, than from the same places to the town of Mobile, the superiority which it enjoys over Mobile, both from its local situation, & depth of water, & indeed over every other harbour South of the Chesapeak, not excepting New Orleans, both for a deposite for foreign commerce as well as a principal Southern Naval depot, will render Pensacola a place of great importance in a very few years after we get possession of it,⁶⁷¹ which it is to be hoped is at no very distant period—

It is presumed that the following considerations are worthy the attention of the Navy Department, & under that impression, they are most respectfully submitted. ?Is it expedient to build a vessel of small draft of [p. 98] water, for the express purpose of performing the duties described in the preceding Journal?

?Is it not expedient to examine by what title Bryant—Paris, Rice, Boles, & others, hold the Islands they reside on; especially as on the two first, there is a fine groth of Live Oak timber

?Is it not expedient to purchase Belle Isle from its proprietors, on which are at least 2000 fine live Oak trees, besides a thriving groth of young timber; Sulpher is likewise found there, & it is likewise reported that silver ore has been found there; but the last assertion has not been confirm'd—

⁶⁷¹ His glowing predictions as to the future commercial importance of Pensacola in American hands have not been realized.

? Is it expedient to explore Red river, in consequence of the information obtain'd from Doctor Sibley & Mr Davenport, if it should be consider'd so ? would it not decrease the expense considerably, for the Agents to proceed by the way of Pittsburg, & down the Ohio & Mississippi to its mouth, & would it not be useful in the intermediate time to request further information from these gentlemen, they reside in Natchitoches—

To the Hon'ble

The Secretary of the Navy
Washington

Washington

Sir The accompanying Journal, Maps, & Report, comprising From P 92 to 98 contains the most prominent acts of our an abstract of this Journal Agency from November 1818 to May 1819 is most respectfully submitted for inspection by

Sir Your most Ob'nt Serv'ts

James Leander Cathcart—
James Hutton

[p. 1]⁶⁷²

APPENDIX

A—No 1⁶⁷³

Washington Nov'r 10th 1818—

To the Hon'ble

the Secretary of the Navy

Sir As the reputation of every officer who undertakes the direction of any branch of public service, is at stake, it becomes a duty which he owes to himself & to his Country to endeavour to perform it correctly, & in as short a time as practicable, & by a proper representation to the Department under which he acts, to anticipate difficulties which may occur in order that they may be provided for; as well as to prevent expectations which human exertion may not be able to realize, from these motives permit me to offer the following observations; 1st viewing the extent of territory that is to be explored from the Mobile to the Mermentau, it is morally impossible, that the Survey can be effected in one season, even if it was already commenced—2nd It is necessary to employ a Pilot on the waters & a guide onshore in order to prevent a fruitless research for what probably may not

⁶⁷² Page numbers, inserted thus in brackets, indicate corresponding pages in the Appendix to the original manuscript Journal.

⁶⁷³ These numbers, indicating the several items in the Appendix, are written in the margin of the original manuscript.

exist; as I find the information which we possess is very limited & imperfect indeed, & we must in a great measure depend (in the first instance) on the information which we may receive from the Surveyor gen'l who is now at St Stephens on the Tombbeckbee; 3rd It will be necessary to employ horses & one or two

We wrote the Surveyor general twice & sent him copies of A 2 & 3 but did not receive any answer from him

vehicles of some sort, to carry the Surveyors instruments, chain & other apparatus, likewise Tents, cooking equipage provisions etc

Boats & a vessel of a small draft of water are likewise indispensable, as the Nonsuch will only be serviceable where she can carry 13 feet water 4th Chain men

The Nonsuch draws 12½ feet water Aft—

to attend the Survey & to mark the boundaries are likewise indispensable,

as well as a servant for each of the Agents, for it would take too much of their time to provide for their own necessities— 5th Arms & ammunition for their protection, & a small medicine chest to promote health are likewise necessary appendages— 6th Ludlows Maps of Louisiana,⁶⁷⁴ or if there is any other on a larger scale, & some stationary & books will likewise be necessary— Those preparations will occasion a considerable expense, the amount of which cannot be ascertain'd, or even conjectured with any degree of precision, it will consequently be requisite to receive instructions, how those expenses are to be defray'd, & likewise how the chain men etc are to be supplied with provisions—

The above observations are most respectfully submitted for your decision by Sir

Your most Ob'nt Servant—

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 2

Sir James Leander Cathcart & James Hutton Esqu'r's having been appointed Agents for the purpose of carrying into effect the Act of Congress entitled, "An Act making reservation of certain public lands to supply timber for naval purposes," permit me to ask the favor of you [p. 2] to furnish Mr Cathcart with a letter

⁶⁷⁴ Maxfield Ludlow, chief clerk in the office of the Surveyor General south of Tennessee, prepared *A Map of the State of Louisiana, with part of the State of Mississippi and Alabama Territory*, on a scale of eight miles to the inch. The legend states that it was "Engraved by W. Charles and J. G. Warnicke," but no date or place of publication is given. An inset on the Map shows the position of the British and American forces in the Battle of New Orleans, 1815; hence the map was published after that date, probably about 1817. The Map contains a great deal of detail on the regions surveyed by Cathcart's party, hence his desire to procure a copy of it to serve as a guide.

requesting the Surveyor gen'l of the Southern section of the Union,⁶⁷⁵ to give them such information, as may be in his possession relative to the location of the lands, & such other aid as may be in his power as will facilitate the execution of the object embraced in their Commission—

I am etc

Sign'd J. C. Calhoun

Act'g Sec'y of the Navy

Josiah Meigs Esq'r

Com'r of the gen'l Land Office

A— No 3

Gen'l Land Office Nov'r 13th 1818

Sir This will be communicated by James Leander Cathcart Esq'r— A copy of a letter from the Navy dep't which accompanies this will explain the objects in view; I will thank you to give Mess'rs Cathcart & Hutton all the aid & information which you can furnish, either personally or otherwise, which may enable them to execute the object of their Commission. I am etc

Tho's Freeman Esq'r

Sign'd Josiah Meigs—

Surveyor gen'l

St Stephens Mississippi⁶⁷⁶—

A— No 4

Norfolk Nov'r 20th 1818—

Sir I am so far on my way towards New Orleans, & expect to sail in two days for that place, on board the United States Schooner Nonsuch where any information you may be pleased to communicate will be thankfully receiv'd by Sir etc

James Leander Cathcart—

A— No 5

Washington Nov'r 14th 1818

Mr Landreth, Surveyor etc

Sir I am directed by the Hon'ble Board of Navy Commissioners, to request you to proceed to Baltimore, in order to purchase the necessary instruments for the contemplated survey, on which we are employ'd; every confidence is placed in your skill & economy, which is a sufficient warrant, that viewing the importance of the service, you will neglect nothing necessary to facilitate its speedy & correct completion, while at the same time you will purchase nothing superfluous— recollecting, that the articles which you do purchase are returnable to the Navy Department or their

⁶⁷⁵ Thomas Freeman. See footnotes 67 and 599, above.

⁶⁷⁶ St. Stephens was in the Alabama Territory in 1818.

Agents— As soon after your arrival at Baltimore as practicable, you will have the goodness to ascertain when you will have the instruments ready to embark, & the day that the Steam boat leaves Baltimore for Norfolk—I am Sir etc

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 6

Norfolk Nov'r 20th 1818

The Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy—

Sir I have the honor to inform you, that I arrived here this morning & was inform'd that the Nonsuch commanded by Lieut. Com'r Claxton, would not be ready for Sea before Tuesday or Wednesday next, when I will embark & proceed according to my instructions, no unnecessary delay will be made by me or the Surveyor; but I regret that we will arive late in [p. 3] the season at New Orleans, & have so many preparations to make, that I am apprehensive that it will not be in our power to meet the expectations of government this season, however what can be done, shall be done, with all possible expedition—

With great resp't etc

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 7

New Orleans Dec'r 29th 1818—

James Hutton Esq'r

Dear Sir The inclosed letter from Com'e Shaw⁶⁷⁷ to the Navy Dep't of the 28th of June 1813 contains much useful information, provided it is correct, which no doubt you have had an opportunity to ascertain during your residence in Louisiana. The paper A in eight paragraphs, contains information communicated by Com'e Patterson & yourself to the Navy Board, but it is supposed by the Navy Com'rs that since you made these communications, that you have had opportunities to confirm or to refute, the most of the opinions therein express'd &, I am instructed to request you to communicate to me the result of your re-searches, in order that we may digest a plan, for the execution of the duties assign'd to us, with as little delay as the nature of these duties will admit, which will tend in a great measure to lessen the expense. The Surveyor

⁶⁷⁷ John Shaw was born in Ireland in 1773 and came to the United States in 1790. He settled in Philadelphia and for the next few years led a seafaring life on vessels engaged in trade with the West Indies and China. He entered the United States Navy and was commissioned a lieutenant on August 3, 1798, and was made a commander in 1804 and captain on August 27, 1807. From 1811 to 1814 he was engaged in improving the fortifications of New Orleans and in the capture of Mobile. At various times he was in charge of the Navy Yards at Norfolk, Charleston, and Boston. He died on September 17, 1823. While the letter referred to by Cathcart is not available, it doubtless describes the topography of the New Orleans and Mobile regions in which Cathcart was interested. (*American State Papers, Naval Affairs*, I, 255, 300, 347, 358, 366, 456, 471, 479, 500, 589, 628, 699, 746, 854; *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVII, 41.)

gen'l who is now at St Stephens, is directed to afford us all the information in his possession, which when I receive will communicate to you— It would be of great

This letter was given by me to Mr Hutton at Franklin on the Teche use to be inform'd correctly, whether the Islands on the Coast to the Southwestward contains timber

worth preserving, as well as the margins of the rivers between the Mississippi & the Mermentau; & likewise whether a large quantity of Red Cedar really exists in the vicinity of Mobile, as from the information which we may procure before we leave New Orleans must be establish'd the date from whence to commence the survey; Inclosed with this is your Commission, confided to me by the Secretary of the Navy, the receipt of which you will please to acknowledge, & requesting you to believe that I will take great pleasure in co-operating with you in every respect, which will promote the interest of the service entrusted to our direction I have the honor &ccc

•
James Leander Cathcart

A— No 8

New Orleans Dec'r 15th 1818—

James Leander Cathcart Esq'r

Sir I have this day receiv'd a communication from the Board of Navy Com'rs by which I learn, that I have had the honor of being appointed jointly with you, as Agent for the survey & selection of vacant unappropriated public lands, which produce Cedar & Live Oak, other duties demanding my presence at the place of my last residence; I regret that I cannot be in this place at the time of your arrival, & therefore beg leave to submit a proposition for your consideration Viz, ?is it not advisable that the section of Country lying West of the Mississippi, (by reason of its climate & local situation) be first survey'd; I think it is decidedly so; if on reflection you should be of this opinion also, my presence in Orleans, will be altogether unnecessary, & after the necessary preparations you may proceed to the town of Franklin on the Teche, where I will be [p. 4] Comodore Patterson will furnish you with every facility; should your opinion on this subject, be different from that which I have express'd oblige me by an early communication

Respectfully &ccc

Sign'd James Hutton—

A— No 9

New Orleans Jan'y 1st 1819—

To the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy

Sir I have the honor to inform you that we arrived here on the 27th ins't and on the 28th I receiv'd a letter which was left here for me by Mr Hutton, informing me that he expected we

A Copy of this letter was sent to the Navy Commis's would join him at Franklin on the Teche; Com'e Patterson is now preparing a six oar'd cutter with which we will proceed in tow, & onboard the Steam boat Gov'r Shelby as far as Lafourche or Plaquemine, where we will have to haul the boat over land about six miles, before we can launch her, owing to the lowness of the water in the Mississippi, unless the rain which has lately fallen, should raise the river sufficient to float the boat over, from thence we will have about 200 miles to row, before we commence the survey, which we deem expedient to begin on the Southwestern lands during the winter, and to proceed North Eastward in the spring, to avoid the Musquitoes, as well as the Marshes when the heat increases, which renders that part of the County extremely sickly and unpleasant—

The Steam boat will leave this City on Sunday morning, and every exertion will be made to compleat the different surveys, in as little time as possible consistent with the good of the service, which is of too much importance to be trifled with; We have receiv'd no information what ever from the Surveyor gen'l, I will apply to Mr Wailes⁶⁷⁸ of Opelousas, for a Map of that part of his district, which has been survey'd if I have an opportunity, which will be of great use to us, and enable us to delineate and to separate private from public property, should they be intermix'd—

With great respect &cc

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 10

Franklin on the Teche

January 14 1819—

To the Hon'ble

The Board of Navy Commissioners

Gentlemen I have the honor to inform you, that we embark'd at New Orleans on board the Steam boat Gov'r Shelby on Monday the 4th ins't at 4 PM; On Tuesday the 5th we fell in with the boat which had left Orleans, two days prior to our departure, the people nearly exhausted with rowing & one man entirely useless, in

⁶⁷⁸ Levin Wailes, Register of the Land Office at Opelousas. See footnote 520, above.

consequence of cold & fatigue, we therefore took them intow, as it was impossible for them to row against the wind & current, and as we found no water in Lafourche, nor in the Canal which communicates between that stream & Lake Verrett, we proceeded to Plaquemine from whence our boat & provisions were hauld over land to Blakes now Browns, where in consequence of rain & [p. 5] other contingencys we did not arrive until Thursday the 7th ins't at 6 PM—

Here followeth an extract from my Journal to this date to which I refer—

I hope the expectations of government may no[t] be too sanguine as to the result of this survey, but it is a well known fact that in East Florida alone, there is a much larger quantity of better timber & easier transportation, than in all the Country we propose to survey, which I hope may be soon in our possession, but you may be assured that no personal consideration will deter us from procuring correct information Mr Hutton has been in quest of a Pilot, & we propose leaving here tomorrow the 15th ins't by which time the people will be sufficiently refresh'd to proceed— Requesting you to accept this as a hasty extract from my Journal, & that you will make allowance for the situation in which I write, I continue with great respect &ccc

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 11

Franklin on the Teche

February 12th 1819—

To the Hon'ble Board of Navy Commissioners—

Gentlemen In my letter of the 14 Ult'o I had the honor to inform you of our arrival at Franklin, & of our proposed rout, which we have in part carried into effect, & in much less time than we contemplated; in the following short shetch or extract from my Journal you will be inform'd how far we have succeeded in the object of our pursuit— Here follows an extract from my Journal from 14th of January to the 12th of February 1819—

I request you gentlemen to consider the preceding very imperfect outline of our proceedings, as only the text, on which our future report is to be predicated; we have been very particular in ascertaining the bearings & dist'ce currents, soundings, & every other requisite to form a compleat Chart, of the places which we have visited, which you will find to be very different

from Darbys⁶⁷⁹ who I am persuaded was never in those parts, but this cannot be done until after our arrival at Washington; We propose staying here a few days to recruit the people, to procure provisions & to overhaul the boat &c to then proceed to St Martinsville, & from thence over land to the Vermillion & Mermentau, where we will hire a boat sufficient for the purpose of exploring those regions & when explored will return by the same rout to Franklin, & from thence to New Orleans (via) Lafourche or Plaquemine as circumstances may dictate— In the lively hope that our exertions will meet the approbation of the President & the different departments of the Navy, I have the honor &ccc

James Leander Cathcart

A—No 12 Vermillion Bridge Feb'y 18, 1819.

Joseph Aborn Esq'r

Dear Sir I receiv'd your favour per Mr Miller, in answer
Answer to a letter wrote at Schooner is in the Carcasou⁶⁸⁰
our req't to procure Terrills river, & in possession of Capt'n
Schooner Orr, whom I have let said Schooner
to, for the purpose of taking salt from the Sabine, & I am not able to say when she will be in these waters—

I am yours respectfully

Sign'd Abel Terrill—

A— No 13 [p. 6] St Martinsville Feb'r 19th 1819

Mess'rs Hutton & Landreth

Gentlemen From all the information which we have been able to collect, it appears to me necessary that we should abandon, our first intention of visiting the Mermentau & its vicinity, unless we can be provided with a deck'd vessel of sufficient burthen to insure the safety of the crew on the sea coast, our boat has been declared wholly inadequate to the task & from the gales of wind which we have since experienced in the river, that unanimous opinion has been confirm'd beyond all manner of doubt; consequently, however mortifying it may be to us, to abandon an expedition so far advanced, I do not concieve that we would be justifiable in rashly risking the lives of our crew, especially as

⁶⁷⁹ William Darby. See footnote 307, above. In spite of numerous errors, Darby's map is excellent for 1816.
⁶⁸⁰ Calcasieu.

government has liberally furnish'd us with the means of procuring a larger vessel^(a) & it was never contemplated by the

(a) For this purpose we were limited to 500 dol's Navy dep't that we should penetrate even so far as we have done,

in a six oar'd cutter, with twelve men onboard, deeply laden with arms ammunition & baggage, besides provisions & water for at least one month which brings her gunwale to within six inches of the sea— The Courier which Mr Aborn sent to the Vermillion in order to procure Mr Terrills Schooner has return'd & brought his answer, which informs us, that he has charter'd her, & that consequently she is not at his disposal, neither does he know when she may return to these waters; she being the only vessel in this vicinity fit for the purpose, we unfortunately have fail'd in the only plan practicable of executing our first intentions, & should we transport our boat overland to the Vermillion, we have one hundred miles of Sea Coast to run along to the Mermentau, & as many to return, consequently liable to the preceding objections—Was it prudent, or even practicable to transport our boat & equipage, over land & to return by the same rout, from hence to the Mermentau, it would cost the United States at least 800 dol's & we could only explore the waters of the Mermentau; & that part of the timber which is on the Sea Coast as far East as Chenier au Tigre would be subject to the objections already mention'd, & must consequently remain unsurvey'd until we are provided with a vessel, fit for the service; I am therefore of opinion, that the object in view would not justify the expense & loss of time which necessarily would occur in putting it into execution, independent of the risk of staving the boat on the rout, either to or from the Mermentau; by an accident of this nature which is by no means improbable, we would even be deprived of the means of returning to New Orleans, for a considerable time in order to prosecute our researches to the East of the Mississippi provided the season should not be too far advanced— We ought likewise to take the character of the people, with whom we have to deal into consideration, who with their cattle would all be hired by [p. 7] the day, & would probably protract our Journey to an indefinite number of days & we would be entirely dependent on them; our own observation has furnish'd us with sufficient evidence, that where the United States are a party, & money is to be gain'd they are not very scrupulous— Should we hire horses and other

carriage for our Tents people baggage &c & proceed to the Mermen-tau without the boat, it would still be attended with great expense, & there is no water carriage but in Canoes which are wholly incapable of accomodating so many people, who must necessarily be arm'd for their own protection, as Mr Aborn the collector, & others, have inform'd us, that those places are occasionally infested with smugglers & pirates, who in consequence of the recent seizures which have been made, are so exasperated against the officers of the United States, that they would not fail to avenge themselves when ever they could do it with impunity; and may I ask you gentlemen ?what defense would it be possible to make; in three or four deep loaded canoes, which even the recoil of one volley of Musquetry would over turn, & would not our character as Officers & as men, be at stake, in leading our crew into such a situation, when the odds is so much against us, especially as the object in view, is not of sufficient importance to justify the risk; should we even succeed to the utmost of our wishes, the sea coast must still remain unexplored & our prudence might justly be call'd in question; I appeal to you Gentlemen to decide whether, if our boat had been on the Sea Coast in the gale of last night, which still continues, she would not inevitably have been lost; for had we put to sea, we would have founder'd, & had we ran her onshore in the surf she would have been dash'd to pieces; or had we succeeded in hauling her onshore, with the help of the surf, she would be so wreck'd as hardly to be able to float, even if our whole force should be able to launch her, for if in the first instance she was not haul'd over the bank she would not be in safety, we therefore would only have had the choice of drowning or starving, as it is morally impossible to travel through the Marsh & Bayous which separates the Sea coast from the inhabited part of the Country— There are many other considerations of minor importance which might be suggested were the preceding not sufficient to justify the abandonment of the expedition, I therefore recommend that we should immediately, as soon as the weather admits, proceed down the Teche, on our return to New Orleans, taking the Rafts on Bayou Sorel, in our rout in order to ascertain the practicability of opening a navigable communication through it; And on our arrival at New Orleans to request Com'e Patterson either to order the Nonsuch or some other vessel, to take us to the mouth of the

Mermentau,⁶⁸¹ & to lay off & on, until me compleat the survey & then to proceed home with us, that is should the season not be too far advanced when we arrive at Orleans; if it should to proceed to Lake Pontchartrain & its vicinity, which would compleat our inspection & survey for the season—

[p. 8] The preceding considerations, are submited for your mature deliberation, & be assured Gentlemen, whether they meet your approbation or not, that you will always find me ready to concur in any measure which may be conducive to *promote the good of the service* in which we are engaged, I therefore request you to signify your opinion on the back of this letter, & continue &ccc

• James Leander Cathcart

To James Leander Cathcart Esq'r in reply—

Sir Your proposition herein contain'd, meets my decided approbation Respectfully &ccc Sign'd James Hutton

A paragraph to the same effect Sign'd John Landreth

A—No 14 Franklin Feb'y 24th 1819—

Mr Hutton

Dear Sir As we are necessarily detain'd here for a few days, to procure provisions, to wait for answer to our letters to Mr Wailes & for other purposes; I think it expedient in order that no time may be lost, to ascertain whether the information which we have receiv'd from Will'm Johnson⁶⁸² Deputy Surveyor of this District & others, is correct or not, relative to the existance of Live Oak & a convenient communication by water with the Gulf of Mexico, on the margin of, & by the Bayous Salé and Robert, a distance of about 27 Miles by land, but near treble the distance by water; I think it therefore necessary that horses should be procured for that service, to lessen the expense, as well as to give me an opportunity to procure information, as well as to take medicine to remove the inflammation in my eyes, which are very painful, I will remain in Franklin; as there exists no absolute necessity for my presence there, & in the mean time I will see that the boat & provisions are ready for our departure by the time that you return— I am &ccc

James Leander Cathcart

⁶⁸¹ This portion of the plan was never carried out, for reasons which are explained in the Journal.

⁶⁸² A resident of the Attakapas region, who was employed as one of the Deputy United States Surveyors of public lands.

A—No 15 Franklin Feb'y 26th 1819—

Mr Hutton

D'r Sir During your absence at Bayou Salé the Schooner James Lawrence touch'd here on her way to New Iberia with sugar from Weeks Island, her owner in part being onboard who is the same gentleman who took our letters from Renthrops ferry to Orleans in Jan'y last, & being desirous to finish our inspection & survey in this section of the Country this season if practicable, that is to say from the Belize to the MermenTau, the Lakes & Islands inclusive, I endeavour'd to enter into a negotiation with him & her commander & gave them the choice of the following routs, promising to wait five or six days for her return to this place from New Iberia, in which time I proposed to visit the Raft on Bayou Sorel— This Schooner draws 6 feet water when loaded & carries 60 Hhds of Sugar & cotton on deck, & has good accomodations for passeng's & is well suited for this service

Sorel— First, to proceed from here to Chenier au Tigre, & from thence thirty or forty miles [p. 9] (if necessary) up the MermenTau, to wait there a sufficient time for the completion of our duties, & then to return by the same rout to Franklin; Second: If he concieved it, to be more to his interest to return to New Orleans direct by the way of the Belize,⁶⁸³ to agree to his pursuing that rout— In either case to man the vessel with our own people, only detaining Capt'n Queré⁶⁸⁴ who is well acquainted with that coast as our Pilot, promising to find our crew with provisions— & requiring nothing but water form them; For this service they demanded the unreasonable price of twenty five dollars per day, giving us the choice of either rout, the shortest of which we might calculate would take us at least one month in performing which in the aggregate would amount to 700 dol's per month 250 dol's more than government had allow'd for the purchase of a vessel for that service; I offer'd those gentlemen 200 dol's for the trip giving them the choice of either rout, prefering that of the Belize & New Orleans, as our duties in this section, would then be accomplish'd, this offer they refused, saying they could make from 600 to 1000 dol's freight from here to Orleans with either cotton or sugar, & this terminated our negotiation; I do not imagine, that we would be justifiable to make any further advance for the vessel, but as in all cases we must have a Pilot, I would be

⁶⁸³ That is, by way of the Gulf of Mexico and up the Mississippi.

⁶⁸⁴ No further information is available on this individual.

willing to give Cap'n Queré fifty or even one hundred dollars to act in that capacity, & as he is part owner of the vessel, viewing the advantages of having her navigated by our own crew to Orleans gratis, it probably may be some inducement to him to accept my proposal which amounts to 300 dollars—I therefore request you to signify your ideas on the subject, you must be well aware that nothing but an anxious desire to effect as much as possible this season has induced me to propose so large a sum, & it is morally impossible to carry our instructions into execution without incurring considerable expense, which as yet has been very trifling considering the importance of the service we are employ'd in—I contine &c

James Leander Cathcart

James Leander Cathcart Esq'r

Dear Sir In reply to the foregoing permit me to observe that if the proposition made to the owners of the James Lawrence should be acceded to by them, it is certainly preferable to the plan we had determined on pursuing, particularly as we are yet not certain that it will be in the power of Capt'n Patterson to furnish us with a proper vessel, in which case our intentions of finishing this section this season would be compleatly frustrated; I think it is too late in the season to purchase any vessel for this service, as she will become positively useless in the survey to the Eastward, & unless built for the occasion unfit for any thing else—
Resp'y &ccc

Sign'd James Hutton

[p. 10]

A— No 16

Franklin Feb'y 15th 1819—

Levin Wailes Esq'r

Reg'r of the W'n dis't of Louisiana

Sir The original of the inclosed copy of a letter from the Gen'l Land Office, was forwarded according to its direction, with a Copy of one from the Navy Department, which is also here included, Those letters we think have not been receiv'd by Mr Freeman,⁶⁸⁵ at least they have not been replied to, & we therefore request you to furnish us with any information in your power, that will facilitate the execution of the objects therein defined—

We believe that there are public lands producing live oak on the Bayou Salé, a small stream emptying into the Bay of St

⁶⁸⁵ Thomas Freeman. See footnotes 67 and 599, above.

Omit in its right place by mistake Beranrd,⁶⁸⁶ as well as on the River Mermentau, but which are intermix'd with individual claims. A Map, Plot, or Sketch of that part of the Country, which it is supposed you can furnish, will be of service, in fact anything of that kind, which may in any way promote the objects in question, will be useful, after an examination they shall be return'd, & the service render'd duly appreciated—

Respectfully &c

James Leander Cathcart
James Hutton

A— No 17

Franklin March 1st 1819—

Joseph Aborn Esq'r

Collector &c New Iberia

Sir The Schooner James Lawrence which is now at New Iberia, pass'd this place a few days since, & Mr Cathcart attempted negociation with the owener & Cap'n to convey the Commission for selecting & surveying public lands producing live oak to the river Mermentau including Chenier au Tigre; Their demands were consider'd exorbitant & we then made the following proposition—

1st To wait five or six days for them to be prepared, after which to proceed to the Chenier au Tigre, thence to the Mermentau, where they shall remain a sufficient time, for the completion of our duties & return by the same rout to Franklin, or if they would prefer direct to the Balize, the last of which we would prefer, in either case to man the vessel with our own crew, only detaining Capt'n Queré who is well acquainted with the Coast, as a Pilot, that we will furnish all provisions, only requiring of them water, & for this service they should be paid 200 dol's This they refused, but as we realy think that it would be to their advantage, we consequently think that they may now accept it, We therefore request you Sir to renew the negotiation with the owner & master, & are hereby authorized to offer an additional compensation of 50 dol's to Capt'n Queré for Pilotage & in case that should not succeed to [offer] 50 more on the same account, provided they go to Orleans by the Balize, making in the whole 300 dollars for the service above stipulated, which viewing the premises is certainly liberal—

⁶⁸⁶ So far as is known this name has never been applied to Cote Blanche Bay, into which Bayou Salé discharges.

In the event of their accession you will oblige us Sir by entering into a contract, in which the conditions, shall be distinctly express'd, and [p. 11] sign'd in the presence of witnesses, & as we are anxious to avoid delay, be so good as to dispatch a Courier to Franklin, the failure of whose arrival by 8 AM on Wednesday will be consider'd a negative to our offers In addition to the above the carriage of the boat must be included—

Respectfully &c

James Leander Cathcart

James Hutton

A— No 18

Opelousas Feb'y 25th 1819

James Leander Cathcart
&
James Hutton } Esq'rs

Gentlemen Learning from the bearer hereof Mr Theale⁶⁸⁷ that you had been up to St Martinsville & return'd since the date of your letter to me, I have been induced to request the favor of him to call on the Post Master of that place,⁶⁸⁸ & take out of the Office, & remit to you a communication which I had the honor to make yesterday— Your letter to me altho dated at Franklin the 15th ins't is Postmark'd at that place the 22nd of Feb'y one week after its date. I am Respect'y &ccc

Sign'd Levin Wailes

A— No 19

Registers Office Opelousas

March 3rd 1819—

From the same to the same

Gentlemen When I had the pleasure of writing to you on the 24th Ult'o I was under an impression that there were no individual claims to the land on the Bayou Salé below the pre-emption claims of Mess'rs Gordy Scott & Robert,⁶⁸⁹ at that time

⁶⁸⁷ It is not possible positively to identify this individual. Hackaliah Theall appears to have been the first member of this family in Attakapas. In 1813 he owned a plantation with four slaves on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish, and he is said to have been one of the first men to cultivate sugar cane in that parish. By 1815 or 1816 Joseph and John Theall, probably the sons of Hackaliah, were both planters on Bayou Teche. It was probably either Joseph or John Theall who carried the letter of Levin Wailes. (*Planters' Banner*, July 1, 1847; April 6, 1848; *Niles' Weekly Register*, XIII, 38-39.)

⁶⁸⁸ Cathcart later identifies this man in the margin as Mr. Charpentier, but it is impossible to identify him more definitely, as this was a common family name in that vicinity.

⁶⁸⁹ These names appear to refer to at least three different individuals. About 1810 Michael, Peter, and Benjamin Gordy are said to have begun the cultivation of sugar cane on public land on lower Bayou Salé, but Michael Gordy is the only member of the family listed as a taxpayer and slaveholder in St. Mary Parish in 1813; he had a plantation and four slaves on Bayou Salé. Peter and Benjamin were probably Michael's sons. There was a plantation with eighteen slaves, owned by Peter Roberts on Bayou Salé in 1813, and another in the same locality with six slaves, owned by "P. & W. Roberts". The only man by the name of Scott living in St. Mary Parish in 1813 was Samuel E. Scott who owned a plantation with four slaves on lower Bayou Teche. These are probably the men referred to by Cathcart. (*Planters' Banner*, July 1, 1847; April 6, 1848.)

however, I had other letters to reply to, between the arrival & departure of the Mail, which did not allow me time to make a very particular examination of the Records in this Office; I now inclose you a draft which I believe may be relied on for accuracy, You will see by it, that there are three claims, located from the mouth of Bayou Salé up; That between the upper lines of the land of Dan'l Callagan⁶⁹⁰ & the lower line of the pre-emption claim of Mr Robert, there is a space of about three miles with the windings of the Bayou, which though it has for the most part been survey'd into sections for Sale, as it has not yet been disposed of, is subject to the disposition of the Government, On this interval are borders of wood land on each bank of the Bayou

**None fit for Naval purposes
vide inspection Page 55 in
the Journal**

& I have understood the principal groth is Live Oak— There is likewise a tongue of Wood land, probably live Oak, extending about a mile & a half along the Coast⁶⁹¹— below the mouth of the Bayou Salé, which is unappropriated— I wrote you a few lines in haste by Mr Theall, to explain the reason why your letter of the 15th Feb'y was not answer'd until the 24th— lest that letter should not have reach'd you, I will repeat, that although your letter bears date at Franklin on the 15th of Feb'y it was not sent from the Office at that place until the 22nd

**No doubt by the neg't of the
Post master Mr Charpentier**

as appears by the postmark; you will oblige me by acknowledging the receipt of any letters of mine, that may reach your hands— Respect'y &c

Sign'd Levin Wailes

[p. 12]

A— No 20

Nova Iberia 2nd of March 1819

Mess'rs Cathcart & Hutton

Gentlemen I receiv'd your favor of yesterday this morning and immediately applied to Capt'n Queré, he would not comply with your proposals, but will hire his vessel to you, & command her himself gratis, for 25 dol's per day, from the time he leaves Franklin until he returns to that place, or arrives at New Orleans;⁶⁹² Capt'n Queré will act as Pilot & is said to be the best

⁶⁹⁰ Daniel Callaghan claimed large tracts of land in the Attakapas region. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, II, 775, 779, 834, 835, 844, 855, 871; III, 91, 99, 100, 103, 104, 119, 125, 126, 134, 152, 153.)

⁶⁹¹ Probably never visited by Cathcart's aides.

⁶⁹² The vessel was never chartered.

on this coast, & will consider the vessel at his own risk, provided his orders are obey'd as pilot, he says his vessel was charter'd to the United States last war⁶⁹³ at Forty two dollars per day, & that he cannot charter her at less than 25\$ per day, if you think proper to take her at that, you will inform him as soon as you can & he will come to Franklin as soon as he can discharge his cargo

I am Gent'n &c sign'd Joseph Aborn

A— No 21

New Orleans March 16th 1819

To the Hon'ble the Board of Navy Commissioners

Gentlemen I had the honor to address you on the 12th Ult'o from Franklin, giving you a short sketch of our proceedings to that date, as soon after as the people were rested, from the great fatigue which they had undergone, & we had procured provisions for them, which we found very difficult, we proceeded to New Iberia &ccc here followeth an extract from my Journal from the 12th Ult'o to the 14th ins't

Respectfully &c

James Leander Cathcart

A— No 22

Navy Com's Office 17th Feb'y 1819—

Sir The Board of Navy Commissioners have been inform'd, "That there remains a considerable quantity of Red Cedar timber, near Fort Claiborne upon the Mobile river,⁶⁹⁴ which is supposed to be suitable for naval purposes, & may be obtain'd at small expense" & the[y] request that you will cause the timber refer'd to, to be examined, & that you will report, how much there probably is, that is fit to be employ'd in the construction of Schooners or vessels of war of larger dimensions & on what terms it can be got out; It belongs to the government—

Respect'y &c Sign'd Jno Rodgers

Pres't of the Board

A— No 23

To Capt'n Dan'l T. Patterson New Orleans—

In answer to the above which was presented to me by Com'e Patterson

James Leander Cathcart presents his respects to Com'e Patterson & begs leave to inform him, that on perusing the letter

⁶⁹³ War of 1812.

⁶⁹⁴ Alabama River.

from the Navy board, of the 17th Ult'o that he coincides with him in opinion, "that the public service would be promoted by the Agents & Surveyor proceeding to Fort Claiborne," which **Vide Journal P's 66 to 82** seems to include an object more immediately in the contemplation of the Board, than an inspection on the Lakes [p. 13] they therefore are ready to embark, as soon as the Nonsuch is ready to receive them; JLC requests Com'e Patterson in the mean time to desire Mr Ferris⁶⁹⁵ to forward to him, all the information he may have collected, in that section of the Country during his long residence there, & especially to confirm or refute the following paragraph of his letter to you, of March 16th 1817, "I have this moment return'd, & feel much gratified, in feeling myself justified in declaring Sir, that from what I have examined of this Grove, it is capable of affording the *Frames of several Ships of the Line*," I sounded bored & blazed 47 trees of the most enormous sizes, say from 5 to 8 feet in diameter "I do not believe there is another equal to it in *America*"— And that you

Vide Appendix B will have the goodness to forward a copy of Mr Ferrises report to Capt'n Claxton, to Nos 1, 2, 3, 4. deliver to me on my return from Fort Claiborne, which if minute in its detail, will supersede the necessity of the Agents visiting the Lakes⁶⁹⁶ next season & save the nation a considerable expense— New Orleans March 17th 1819—

A— No 24

New Orleans March 17th 1819—

Levin Wailes Esq'r

Reg'r of the W'n dis't of Louisiana

Sir Your several communications of the 25th of Feb'y & 3rd of March, are at hand, 'though that adverted to in your last of the 24th of Feb'y has fail'd. The desired information however was contain'd in those hereby acknowledged, & we return you our thanks for your promptitude—

Respectfully &cc

James Leander Cathcart

James Hutton

⁶⁹⁵ Jonathan D. Ferris. See footnote 537, above.

⁶⁹⁶ Pontchartrain, Maurepas, and Borgne.

A—No 25

New Orleans March 17th 1819—

Joseph Aborn Esq'r

Collector &c New Iberia

Sir Your letter of March 2nd has been receiv'd some days—
The terms proposed by the owners of the Schooner James Lawrence, we deem exorbitant, & incompatible with the views of the Navy Dep't & consequently cannot be accepted by us, for your politeness we tender to you our thanks—

Respect'y &cc

James Leander Cathcart—

James Hutton

A—No 26

Commodore Patterson presents his respects to James L Cathcart Esq'r & requests a written requisition for transportation for himself Mr Hutton & Mr Landreth, & the date as nearly as can be anticipated, when the transportation will be required & at what point—New Orleans March 19th 1819

Answer

James Leander Cathcart presents his respects to Com'e Patterson, & in answer to his note of this date, begs leave to observe, that in consequence of his promptitude in meeting the wishes of the Navy Commissioners as communicated in their letter to Com'e Patterson of the 17th Ult'o & which [p. 14] he recommended; JLC understood that the United States Schooner Nonsuch was order'd to take the Agents & Surveyor to the Mobile & that they were to proceed from thence in the Felucca⁶⁹⁷ Bull dog to Fort Claiborne & on compleating the duty assign'd them, they were to return to her to Mobile, & there embark onboard the Nonsuch, which would have orders to convey them to a Port in the Chesapeake— Nothing has intervened since to render any alteration desirable or useful; the period of re-embarkation at the Mobile, will entirely depend upon the extent of the inspection & survey, which will most probably terminate between the 25th of April & 5th of May, provided the Bull dog will be ready to receive us on our arrival there— In meeting the wishes of the Commissioners & of Com'e Patterson, he presumes, that the 1st of May will be the date of transportation, as near as can be anticipated, the Mobile the point of departure, & Alexandria⁶⁹⁸ the Port of destiny which we would prefer—

⁶⁹⁷ Type of small naval vessel.

⁶⁹⁸In Virginia; then a part of the District of Columbia.

A—No 27

To the Hon'ble the Board of Navy Commissioners Washington

Gentlemen I had the honor to address you on the 16th inst from New Orleans; the same day Com'e Patterson presented to us your letter to him of the 17th Ult'o, which induced us to change the rout we had previously proposed to take of which you were duly inform'd believing by so doing we would more fully meet the objects which the Board immediately had in view— In pursuance of this determination we embark'd onboard the Nonsuch, as soon as she was reported ready to receive us, & arrived in Mobile Bay on the afternoon of Sunday the 28th inst & yesterday Mr Hutton & myself came up to town, in a Schooner that was passing, just at the commencement of a Southerly gale, which continued all night, with heavy rain, thunder & lightning— Considering that the strong winds which we have experienc'd since we left Orleans, will prevent the Bull dog, from arriving here probably for a week & finding the rivers high & current rapid, we could not calculate upon geting to Fort Claiborne in her in less than a week, & probably not in a fortnight after her arrival here, we therefore have determined to take passage in a Steam boat, which will start tomorrow or next day for St Stephens, from whence we will cross over land to Fort Claiborne, leaving directions for the Bull dog to meet us there; the information which we have received here confirms the report of the existance of Red Cedar in that neighbourhood especially on the margin of Cedar Creek, about six or eight miles from opposite the town of Jackson, but of its situation for transportation we have not receiv'd any satisfactory acc't neither is it likely we shall, as it is reported here, that the land on which it grows are to be offer'd for Sale next month; If on our arrival in its vicinity we find it of sufficient importance to warrant its reservation, we will immediately make application [p. 15] to the proper authority to postpone the sale until the pleasure of the President is made known to them, not doubting, but they will find themselves justifiable in so doing, when an object of so much national importance is at stake—

Those duties compleated we will immediately return to a Port in the Chesapeake; Cap'n Claxton of the Nonsuch, having rec'd orders from Commodore Patterson to that effect— Hoping that our exertions will meet the approbation of the Department, I have the honor &c

Mobile March the 30th 1819—

James Leander Cathcart

A—No 28

Mobile March 31st 1819—

Lieu't Com'r Claxton

U. S. Schooner Nonsuch

Sir On the arrival of the Bull dog, you will have the goodness to furnish her with provisions &c for a month, provided she has not that quantity onboard, to then order our Marque,⁶⁹⁹ Tent & tent equipage to be put onboard, & dispatch her for Fort Claiborne without delay, with directions should the Commander not find us there, to direct to us at St Stephens, however we will endeavour to have a letter there waiting for him on his arrival— This arrangement is essentially necessary, as there is no other conveyance for us from thence down the Rivers Alabama & Mobile when our duties are completed. With great resp't &c

James Leander Cathcart

A—No 29

St Stephens April 6th 1819—

Israel Pikens Esq'r

Reg'r of the Land Office St Stephens Alabama Ter'y

Sir The undersign'd Agents of the United States acting under the act of Congress of the 1st day of March 1817, & the particular direction of the Hon'ble the Secretary of the Navy, having receiv'd orders to make certain reservations of such tracts of lands as produce Red Cedar, fit for naval purposes, which may be found in this Territory, especially on Cedar creek in the vicinity of Fort Claiborne, & understanding that a part of those lands are to be exposed to sale on next Monday, most respectfully requests your assistance & advice, as to the manner in which they are to be reserv'd as it is next to impossible that those lands can be survey'd before the sale takes place, & afterwards it would be inutil⁷⁰⁰ to survey them, when they had become the property of individuals— The undersign'd Agents beg leave most respectfully to suggest, that it might be conducive to the public service, to postpone the sale of lands, producing red cedar until it shall be ascertain'd whether it is fit for naval purposes or not—

The undersign'd will with pleasure await your answer requesting that no unnecessary delay may be made, as the United States Schooner Nonsuch is detain'd at Mobile until their return; they beg leave to observe that Mr Burrows⁷⁰¹ who is the bearer of

⁶⁹⁹ Marquee: a large field tent, or part of the same.

⁷⁰⁰ Inutile, meaning unprofitable or useless.

⁷⁰¹ Probably Gabriel Burrows, who claimed large tracts of land in that vicinity. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 631, 638, 668, 708, 782, 793, 855.)

this will return here in a short time, & if no communication can take place earlier, Mr B's will with pleasure bring us your reply.

— Resp'y &c

James Lea'r Cathcart

Sign'd James Hutton

[p. 16]

A— No 30

Washington Courthouse

James Leander Cathcart)

April 8th 1819—

&) Esq'rs

James Hutton)

Gentlemen Your letter has been rec'd by the hands of Mr Burrows, on the subject of the Cedar creek lands— Alto the land sales will commence on Monday next, the Sale of the lands on Cedar Creek will not take place until toward the middle of the 2nd week, you will therefore have sufficient time for viewing the parts which may answer for reserving for the purpose of Cedar timber— After having your judgments in relation to the expediency of making a reserve of any particular sections, or quarter sections, & being satisfied of your authority under the Act of Congress, we will determine on the responsibility of defering the Sale.

Should any parts answer the proposed purpose, it is desired that the particular sections or quarters may be designated, as it is a great object, that as much as possible of those valuable lands be brought into Market, perhaps as much to the community & the public, as that of the reservation of the timber— I embrace the opportunity of Colonel Dinsmoor, for a conveyance of this line, & am in too great a haste for a more regular answer

Y'r's Resp'y

Sign'd Israel Pikens

A— No 31

Claiborne April 14th 1819

Israel Pikens Esq'r

Reg'r of the East'n dis't of Alabama

Sir Having deposited in your office the copies of the authority under which we act, & presuming that you are satisfied of its authenticity, we have examined the Cedar timber in the vicinity of Cedar creek, & find it such as to make it incumbent on us to select for reservation, in obedience to our instructions, the Sections herein after enumerated; We likewise think it ex-

pedient strongly to recommend to you the postponement of the Sales of said lands, until the pleasure of the President is made known to you— Viz: The Sections reserved are the following— In Township 7 Range 4 East, are Sections, 32, 33, 34 & fraction

(Vide) Journal Page 80 29: In township 6 Range 4 E are sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12. As we believe that depredations are daily committed on those lands— we beg you Sir in case they are reserv'd to employ such means to prevent the cutting or removing of Cedar, as you may judge effectual—

Enclosed is a copy of the Act of Congress, We are Respectfully &ccc

James Leander Cathcart

Sign'd James Hutton

A— No 32

Claiborne April 14th 1819

Colonel Philips of Claiborne

Having understood from your Son, that you would probably be willing to enter into a contract for the cutting & delivery of Cedar timber, to be cut of the lands of the United States [p. 17] either at the mouth of Cedar creek or at Mobile, & believing it to be the wish of the Navy Commissioners, to make such a contract, although we are not empower'd to enter into it, we take the liberty of requesting you if such a contract is desirable, to signify your terms specifically to the Hon'ble Board of Navy Commissioners with all convenient dispatch—

Respectfully

James Leander Cathcart

sign'd James Hutton

A— No 33

Claiborne April 14th 1819—

Dan'l T. Patterson Esq'r

New Orleans—

Sir We arrived at Dogriver on the 28th Ult'o & at Mobile on the 29th, at which place a Steam boat was preparing to start for St Stephens, to which place we found it would be necessary to go to prevent the Sale of the lands (as Mr Pikens the Register of the Land Office of the Eastern district of the Alabama territory, resides there where the Sale is to take place) which were the object of our expedition, & which were to be disposed of this month—

The Bull dog had not arrived, & by accounts which we had receiv'd of her, we despair'd of seeing her in less than two weeks, & consequently took passage in the Steam boat, requesting Capt'n Claxton to send our expected vessel in order for our return—

The inclosed copy of a letter to the Register of this district dated this day will inform you fully of the subject before us, the nearest we can come to the terms, that Cedar can be got out at by contract, is to take the price given by Jacob Barker of Newyork to Colonel Philips of the place, which is \$1.50 Cts for logs of any size & 12 feet long, this is at least 100% too much, by labourers we think it can be got out for one half the money

The Bull dog not having yet arrived, & our duties being finish'd we are on the point of departing in a military boat for Mobile from whence we will communicate more fully, Resp'y & ccc

James Leander Cathcart

James Hutton

A—No 34

Dautrieuse Dubuclet, Benoist de St Clair & Francois Gonsoulin, claim an Island calld Belle Isle, in the Bay of Attchafalaya,⁷⁰² which they represent to contain one league in front, with the ordinary depth of 40 Arpents— To this grant they are confined by the order of Survey of Governor Miro, dated 2nd of May 1783, confirm'd by Act of Congress as an original grant—

Mess'rs Bruissiers of Kentucky, claims by right of settlement alone, & his claim was confirm'd by the Commissioners, but is still in litigation, & Gonsoulin not long ago offered it for

Attakapa Report of Claim No 33—Copied from the original Report Sale, but no purchaser appear'd, it is supposed that Bruissiers claim will be admited, but this is merely conjecture

[p. 18]

A—No 35

Washington May 21st 1819.

Hon'ble Smith Thompson Esq'r
Secretary of the Navy

Sir We have the honor to inform you that we arrived at Baltimore, in the United States Schooner Nonsuch Capt'n Claxton, on the evening of the 19th ins't (last from Mobile) after a very boisterous & disagreeable passage of 27 days, having

⁷⁰² On the shore of the bay.

compleated the duties assign'd us, so far as was practicable this season, & we were furnish'd with the means— Our rout was from New Orleans, by the Plaquemine the Atchafalaya, Lakes & the Teche, as high up as St Martinsville & from thence down the Teche &c, to Bayou Derbon East, & from that place past Deer & Plumb Islands to Belle Isle West, on the Gulf of Mexico, all of which we particularly inspected; thence through the Lakes Chetimaches Palourde Platt & Chicó, which with their Islands we likewise inspected, from thence by circuitous route to Bayou Sorel, through which we found a navigable passage from the Lakes to the Atchafalaya, impeded by Rafts which can easily be removed & which will shorten the distance from Atakapas & the Lakes to the Mississippi nearly one half, from thence we return'd to New Orleans. In this section of the Country we found a large quantity of Live Oak fit for naval purposes, from two to nine feet in diameter with a water carriage in Flats, to the Mississippi, which will be more particularly described in our Report & the Charts, which will accompany it, as soon as we can select the former from our Journal & delineate the latter which will necessarily take up much time— From New Orleans we proceeded to Mokille, up that river & the Tombeckbeé to St Stephens, where we stop'd the Sale of the lands, which contains a large quantity of fine Red Cedar situated on the Alabama river, & which would have taken place in a few days, had not our presence prevented it—

We then cross'd over land to Fort Claiborne & down the Alabama to Cedar Creek, where we selected for reservation, several sections of public land, which we suppose contains at least, 20,000 fine Cedar trees, from 1 to 3 feet diam'r & about 1500 already fell'd besides a flourishing groth of Young trees, which will be progressing & many will be fit to cut, by the time the larger trees are exhausted; this Cedar is advantageously situated, on a creek & may be rafted down the Alabama, & ship'd in the bay of Mobile to the different depots at a moderate expense— We have been extremely minute in ascertaining the Courses, distances, depth of water, and geology, of the different districts which we have visited, all which will in due time be respectfully submitted, which we feel confident, will [p. 19] meet the approbation of the President & the Navy Dep't & under this

impression we have the honor to subscribe ourselves with great respects Sir

Your most Ob'nt Serv'ts

James Leander Cathcart
James Hutton

B—No 1

Madisonville Sat'y 5 PM

March 16th 1817

Sir I avail myself of the earliest occasion to report in this partial manner, my success, to this moment, in the pursuit of Live Oak ship timber;⁷⁰³ The grove however aluded to in a former communication, which I did myself the honor to make, & to which you directed my attention, did not meet my expectations or wishes, either with regard to quantity or quality; indeed Sir it is rare to find in this Country, or in any part that I have ever seen, Live Oak exceeding 20 inches in diameter that is not attended with very serious objections; the trunks are generally either hollow, or very much wind shaken, & the branches much injured perhaps by heavy blows, or else too small, to be converted to the frames of heavy ships— From that grove my attention was directed to scattering trees, in order to select some particular pieces, of those frames which I had spoken of— My researches produced one good Stem, One good wing transom, several floors, & lower futtocks, this trifling quantity did not seem to atone for my gross mistake; I therefore had recourse to a grove that I had seen from the Mast head of No 27 in 1811; and of which some flattering information, had been procured from some old settlers, I have this moment return'd & feel much gratified, in feeling myself justified in declaring Sir, that from what I have examined of this Grove it is capable of affording the frames of several *Ships* of the *line*, altho the great difficulty I had in geting to it, prevented me from examining not perhaps one tenth part— I sounded, bored, & blazed, 47 trees & of the most enormous sizes, say from 3 to 8 feet in diameter, I do not believe that there is another equal to it [in] America—

⁷⁰³ He is describing the extensive grove reported on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

B— No 2

U S Shipyard Tchifonctte

March 27th 1817—

Sir In obedience to your orders of the 7th ins't I have critically examined Live Oak grove refer'd to in my letter of the 29th of [p. 20] Septm which I did myself the honor to address you, And in order to accomplish your wish, in a general point of view, have examined every live oak tree from the mouth of Tangepara,⁷⁰⁴ to the mouth of Castine Buaico,⁷⁰⁵ on the margin of Lake Pontchartrain, in all parts where that description timber could be found; And do myself the honor to report—

That the grove in question, situate in a S by E direction & about 1½ miles from the yard, was found so inconsiderable, that I regret having noticed it, in my communication, I pass'd through it with hunters, & who on enquiry inform'd me that it contain'd from 1000, to 1500 trees, of a description, like those I observ'd myself— That it does not contain more than 70 or 80 trees & which are generally defective— That not more than three or four good Floors, four or five good lower Futtocks, five or six seconds, & about 20 good knees can be selected from it, the land is claim'd by a Mr Deucees—⁷⁰⁶

That Hog Island⁷⁰⁷ situated SW by S, about 2½ miles by land & 7 by water from the yard, contains about 60 trees, from 2 to 5 feet in diameter 'though subject to the same objections; And that one or two good Stems one or two good wing transoms, with seconds & thirds, 5 or 6 good floors, 8 or 10 lower futtocks, 8 or 10 seconds & thirds, 2 or 3 Fashion timbers, & 60 or 70 large knees, can be selected from it, subject however to much inconvenience, from the necessity of half a mile causway— That in a SW direction about 5 miles by land & 10 by water from the yard, are situate 3 small Islands,⁷⁰⁸ public ground, & for the present call'd, the Commissioners, & which contains about 100 large trees, whose trunks are generally short & rugged, their branches large & numerous, & susceptible of being converted, to almost any use in a frame; from that & the vicinity I think can be procured, 30 floors, 30 lower Futtocks, 40 to 50 seconds & thirds, 3 or 4 good fashion timbers, & about 200 good knees, but

⁷⁰⁴ Tangipahoa River.

⁷⁰⁵ Bayou Castine, near the modern town of Mandeville.

⁷⁰⁶ Probably a phonetic attempt to spell the name of John Delassize, who claimed land in that region. (*American State Papers, Public Lands*, III, 468.)

⁷⁰⁷ Near the mouth of the Tangipahoa River.

⁷⁰⁸ Near Pass Manchac.

subject to great difficulty, in geting them out as 740 yards, will require a temporary bridge—

That on an Eastern direction from the mouth of the Tchifoncte to Castine Bayou, not more than 30 trees can be procured of any moment, & from which can be selected one or two Stern posts, 6 or 8 Knight heads, 8 or 10 Naval timbers & 10 or 12 Cant timbers—

That about 3 miles farther East, & about 2 miles from the Lake,⁷⁰⁹ is situate a grove of say 200 large trees; indisposition had prevented me from examining it thoroughly, but report says double my credit, & of superior quality, I propose a minute inspection, within four or five days; With the exception of this grove I have been very particular Sir, though possibly deceived—The Live Oak of this Country, except the groth on sand beaches & under 20 inches in diameter, appearing so subject to the uniform defects of hollows, windshakes, & if I may be allow'd the expression, Tumors, that no precise value can be determined on, until my tool & mould is applied—

I have the honor to be with great resp't &cc

Com'e D T Patterson
New Orleans

Signd— Jon'n D Ferris

[p. 21]

B— No 3

United States Ship yard Tchifoncte

April 15th 1819—

Sir In obedience to your order, under date of the 16th Ult'o I have the honor to state; that on the 25th of Sept'r 1816 a Grove of Live Oak was accidentally discover'd, which was conceiv'd extensive & of an excellent groth, & on making enquiries of hunters & inhabitants near it, my opinion was confirm'd, which produced my premature report to you, under date of the 29th of the same month—

That pursuant to your orders under date of March 7th 1817 this Grove situate about S by E 1½ miles dist: from the yard, was critically examined, & found to contain but 80 trees; & incapable of yielding more than 3 or 4 floor timbers, 4 or 5 lower Futtocks, five or six, seconds & about twenty large knees— That on the 10th of March; Hog Island, situate on the Eastern bank of the Tchifoncte was explored, Sixty trees from two to five

⁷⁰⁹ Probably in what is now Chefuncte State Park.

feet diam'r was found there; & capable of yielding one or two good stern pieces, one of two good wing transoms, with seconds & thirds, five or six Floor timbers, eight or ten lower Futtocks

Copy

Rec'd at Washington

May 26th 1819

eight or ten seconds & thirds, two or three Fashion timbers & sixty or seventy large knees— That on the 15th & 16th of March, my first visit to the Grove, about 3 miles west of the Mouth of the Tchifoncte took place, after boring & otherwise examining 47 large trees; & ascending to the summit of one to overlook the groth of Cane; and having had the assurances of the old & most respectable inhabitants of this quarter, that *several thousand* large trees were to be found there, produced my hasty note, under date of the 16th on my return to the yard, but subsequent investigation, has convinced me of the error, as not more than 100 trees can be found, those capable of yielding not more than 30 floor timbers, 30 or 40 lower Futtocks, 30 or 40 seconds & thirds, 3 or 4 Fashion timbers, & about 200 large knees— That from the pass of Manschack to the mouth of the Bonficau, but trifling quantities of good timber can be found, & the growth of live oak generally subject to many objections, except when situate in the interior, or one or two miles from the Lake, where the growth is small, the quantity limited, and detach'd—

I have the honor to be Sir With great respect

Your Obe't Serv't

Com'e Dan'l T Patterson

New Orleans

Sign'd Jona D Ferris

Note: The land on which the Timber stands is claimd by individuals

Signd— D.T.P.

[p. 22]

B— No 4

New Orleans April 28th 1819

Sir Enclosed I transmit you a copy of the Report of Sailing master J. D. Ferris, on the subject of the Live Oak timbers, on the borders of Lake Pontchartrain, from passe Manchac,⁷¹⁰ to Bayou Bon fouca,⁷¹¹ on the northern shore, & on the banks of the River

⁷¹⁰ Pass Manchac.

⁷¹¹ Bayou Bonfouca.

**Receiv'd with the inclosures
at Washington May 26th
1819**

Tchefoncti; the land on which the timber therein stated stands, is claim'd by individuals, this circumstance, and the very small quantity

renders it, unworthy the notice of Government, & is evidence of the much greater importance, your surveys have been, by proceeding to Fort Claiborne, than by examining the borders of Lake Pontchartrain—

I am very respectfully Sir Your Ob't Serv't
James Leander Cathcart Esq'r Sign'd Dan'l T Patterson
U S Agent &c—
Washington

Note

The preceding Report & Com'e Pattersons letter appears to us to be conclusive, & that consequently, any further inspection on Lakes Pontchartrain, Maurepas, Borgne, & their vicinity, is as unnecessary as useless; therefore from St Stephens on the Tombbeckbee, to Fort Claiborne on the Alabama, & from that, as far West as the Mermentau river has been inspected & reported on, with the exception of the banks of that river, & Chenier au Tigre, on both which it is said there grows a quantity of fine live Oak timber, as well as on the Trinity, & Sabine rivers, which may be inspected at the same time that our line is establish'd, after the ratification of our treaty with Spain as they are in the vicinity of each other & by adopting this measure, the expense of a special inspection and survey would be spared—

James Leander Cathcart
James Hutton

“THE AMERICAN SIDDONS”

By JOHN SMITH KENDALL

The name of Mary Ann Duff probably has no particular significance for a resident of New Orleans nowadays. Yet there was a time when it was something with which to conjure in every center where the English language was spoken, or the English drama admired. For Mary Ann Duff was a very great celebrity. Edwin Forrest—no mean judge in such matters!—once described her as the greatest actress in the world. For many years she ruled the American stage practically without rival. She played the grandest rôles opposite Cooper, Wallack, Kean, George Frederick Cooke, John Howard Payne, the elder Booth, the once-universally-admired Conway, and many another luminary of the theater, and all of them bore witness to her beauty, charm, and extraordinary histrionic gifts. She was still surrounded by the nimbus of that magnificent reputation when she retired from the stage, came to New Orleans—and practically disappeared from public notice.

That was partly her own fault, if fault it be to prefer seclusion and domesticity to the excitement and travail of life behind the footlights. In New Orleans she wished to be known merely as Mrs. Seaver, or Xavier—the name is spelled both ways—the wife of a hard-working and not-too-successful attorney. To her neighbors she revealed herself as a busy housewife, whose horizons did not extend beyond the four walls of her unpretending home, and whose one relaxation was found in attendance upon religious services. For nearly twenty years New Orleans saw in her only a small, shy, reticent, elderly woman, and jostled her about at market on weekdays, or sat beside her on Sundays at church, nor ever suspected that here was an international figure, discussed and acclaimed by some of the most famous men then living. In the local theaters, perhaps, there were at first those who knew who Mrs. Seaver really was, but, if so, that knowledge gradually faded, until, when she and her husband left New Orleans never to return, the fact was no longer recalled even there, that New Orleans had entertained an angel unawares.

But eminence on the stage was not the exclusive claim which Mrs. Duff—or Mrs. Seaver, whichever you prefer!—had upon

our memory. Hers is a small but permanent place in the history of English poetry. She was the sister-in-law of the Anglo-Irish poet, Thomas Moore, and was the heroine of a love affair commemorated in one of Moore's most popular ballads. Those were the days when Moore's sentimental verses were read and admired everywhere. No boudoir in Great Britain or the United States was complete without a copy of *Lalla Rookh* or the *Irish Melodies*. It was a mark of "female culture" to shed tears over *Paradise and the Peri*. In every drawing-room Moore's songs, set to music, usually of his own devising, were sung with rapturous applause, and none more frequently than the one beginning:

Mary, I believed thee true,
And I was blest in so believing,
But now I mourn that e'er I knew
A maid so fair and so deceiving!
Fare thee well!

These verses were as much admired in New Orleans as elsewhere. But how surprised would have been the singers who rendered them in the parlors of the "Garden District", or the rococo salons of the Vieux Carré, had someone acquainted with the secret told them that the object of the bard's charmingly despairing lines was a quaint little greying lady who lived in a vine-covered cottage in Canal Street, almost within sound of the voices which reiterated the poet's melodious reproaches!

Mary Duff was the second of three sisters, all beautiful, gifted, and adorable. They were the daughters of an English gentleman named Dyke, who at one time was in the employ of the East India Company. He died, and left his family in straitened circumstances. The widow, rightly believing that her children could earn their bread nowhere so easily as on the stage, bundled them off to Paris, to be trained by the well-known French ballet-master, named D'Egville. The Dykes were Londoners, and knew the difficulties which beset a theatrical career in the greatest city in the world. Perhaps that was the reason why they made their débuts in the Dublin theater. Their youth, grace and modesty, no less than their skill, won the hearts of the Irish public. Mary, who was fifteen years of age, was the outstanding member of the trio. Among those who succumbed to her juvenile attractions was Thomas Moore.

Moore proposed marriage to the youthful ballerina, but her affections were already mortgaged, and she declined the honor. Thereupon the poet took his pen in hand to indite the verses quoted above. The grief of the "National Anacreon," as Moore was called in his native island, may have been sincere enough at the moment, but it was speedily assuaged by the discovery that the second of the sisters, Elizabeth, was no less lovable than Mary. Elizabeth smiled upon the bard's suit. He celebrated his acceptance with another ballad, likewise popular in that languishing period:

Fly from the world, O Betsy, with me!
Thou wilt never find any sincerer.
I'll give up the world, O Betsy, for thee.
I never met any that's dearer!
Then tell me no more with a tear and a sigh
That our loves will be censured by many.
All, all have their follies, and who will deny
That ours is the sweetest of any?

Moore and Elizabeth were married in 1811. Their union, unlike those of Byron, Shelley, and so many other contemporary literary marriages, was ideally happy. Mrs. Moore left the stage, and seems never to have regretted the career which she abandoned at her marriage. In fact, Mary was the only one of the three sisters whose matrimonial ventures helped, rather than hindered, her professional ambitions. Anne, the youngest of the Dyke girls, died soon after marrying William Murray, manager of the Theater Royal in Edinburgh. She was said to have shared her sister's talent, but passed away before she had any real opportunity to develop it.

The man whom Mary Dyke preferred to Moore as a husband was John R. Duff, a young actor connected with the Dublin theater. In the hyperbolical phraseology in vogue in that day, he was described as "an Apollo in person and a Crichton in accomplishments." He had been a classmate of Moore at Trinity College, where he was educated for the bar. The law, however, had no attractions for him, compared with those of the theater. He and Mary were married in 1810, before she had completed her sixteenth year. From that time to Duff's death, twenty-one years later, they lived together, it is said, more as lovers than as ordinary everyday married people.

At the time of his marriage Duff was under contract to the firm of Powell & Dickson, managers of the Boston, Massachusetts, theater, to fill a season's engagement at that famous playhouse. He and his bride sailed for America shortly after the wedding. Duff made his appearance before a Boston audience on November 2, 1810, as Octavian in *The Mountaineers*. On the 5th of that month he was seen as "Gossamer" and "Jerry Diddler". Public opinion was long undecided as to whether he had been more successful in the tragedy, or in the two comedies. It was apparent from the first, however, that he was a highly accomplished artist —a reputation which he sustained through the long years over which his American career extended.

Young Mrs. Duff was taken into the Powell & Dickson company, and on December 31, 1810, she began that connection with the American theater which was destined to last so long and to lead her on to such extraordinary distinction. On that date she played Juliet to her husband's Romeo. The performance "was witnessed with pleasure by a numerous audience," according to a biographer writing many years later in the *Boston Globe*. But, added this sapient scribe, "it failed to create as profound a sensation as had been anticipated. . . . Charming in every expression of grace and beauty, the representation was too gentle, delicate and refined, and lacked too much of the soul of passion which must accompany it, to ensure success. It was called beautiful but weak." Time, however, remedied whatever defects might have detracted from the perfection of this initial performance, and Mrs. Duff's Juliet ultimately became the most impassioned personification of the lovesick girl even witnessed on the American stage. In fact, she matured in her art with astonishing rapidity, and soon was playing with entire satisfaction to applauding audiences many of the rôles in which Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Darley, and other prominent actresses of that day had long been unrivalled. Her control over the audience was so complete that, eventually, she came to dominate the scene, often to the discomfiture of eminent Thespians who were billed with her, and who counted upon holding the center of the stage themselves. For instance, in 1821, when, in one of the greatest moments of her career she appeared with the elder Kean, she all but snatched the honors of the evening from that illustrious actor. Annoyed by this untoward circumstance, Kean took occasion to request Mrs. Duff to modify the intensity of her performance, "as he

merely desired his efforts seconded, not rivalled"—an unintentional compliment, though certainly the highest the famous Britisher ever paid a member of his profession.

It is not the purpose of the present paper, however, to relate in detail the story of the Duffs in America. That is a matter of history. The facts are easily accessible, especially in the biography by Joseph Ireland, who visited Mrs. Duff in her retirement in New Orleans, and has left us a brief but attractive account of her life in this city. I wish merely to put on record the scraps of information which have come down to us from other sources, in order that the memory of an illustrious resident of the Crescent City may not wholly disappear in the community where she dwelt for twenty happy years.

Mrs. Duff paid her first visit to New Orleans in 1832. That was the year of the great cholera epidemic in the northern part of the United States. This fell disease, entering the country at the unguarded port of New York, swept from city to city, leaving desolation and mourning in its wake. It was particularly virulent at Cincinnati in October of that dreadful year. At that time Mrs. Duff was filling an engagement at the local theater. So bad were the conditions that reports of her death from the cholera, which were circulated as far away as Baltimore, Maryland, were readily credited. The *Baltimore Republican*, which printed the news, subsequently denied its accuracy, but not before the story had found its way to New Orleans. There, both announcement and contradiction found their way into the columns of the *Courier* on December 14. Incidentally, this is the earliest reference to Mrs. Duff that I have been able to locate in the New Orleans press. The *Courier* had the odd idea of publishing the two items in the same issue, as two separate and independent articles, apparently leaving the reader to form his own opinion as to the authenticity of each: a form of journalistic pussyfooting for which, perhaps, something might be said even at the present day.

Mrs. Duff did not die in Cincinnati, but a great many other persons did, and when she embarked on a river steamboat for the long trip down the Ohio and the Mississippi, she was accompanied by certain unsuspected but terrifying fellow passengers—the germs of the disease. The cholera broke out just after the boat entered the Mississippi. Thereafter, the voyage must have

been a veritable nightmare. Mrs. Duff ministered to the dying, and read the hurried prayers with which the bodies of the dead were consigned to the turbid waters of the great river. She seems to have acted with admirable skill and courage. On her arrival in New Orleans the survivors tendered her a vote of thanks for what she had done. The newspapers made a brief reference to the fact, but with that reticence with which they treated everything but politics, refrained from adding the details with which a later-day journalist would certainly have embellished the story. All that we know of that terrific voyage is contained in the foregoing account of a devoted woman's heroic behavior.

Mrs. Duff came to New Orleans under contract to James H. Caldwell to appear at his American Theater. At that time Caldwell operated a chain of theaters all through the Mississippi Valley, and well up into the Ohio country. It is quite likely that, on her way to New Orleans, Mrs. Duff acted in some of these places, and at others on her return trip to the North. At any rate, the three or four weeks over which her journey extended afforded time for a stop or two en route; for in those uninformed days the fact that cholera was rampant on the boat, would not have debarred the voyagers from landing here and there, and going ashore. She reached New Orleans about November 23, and the next day it was announced that she would spend the ensuing four months in the city; and, in fact, she did not leave until March 15, 1833. So prolonged a sojourn must have provided ample opportunity to savor the enchantments of the old city. May we not conclude that, later, when Mrs. Duff (now Mrs. Seaver) was casting about for a permanent abiding place, her decision was dictated by the recollection of an initial acquaintance that had been altogether delightful?

Mrs. Duff opened her engagement at the American Theater on November 27, 1832, in *The Fatal Marriage*. She took the part of Isabella, and was supported by J. M. Scott as Biron. She appeared thereafter at irregular intervals, as follows:

December 1—Mrs. Beverley, in *The Gamester*, supported by J. H. Barton as Beverley.

December 4—Adelgetha, in *Adelgetha*, supported by Scott as Michael, and by Muzzy and Field.

December 6—Lady Macbeth, in *Macbeth*, with Barton as Macbeth.

December 8—Rose Redland, in *The Robber's Wife*.

December 11.—Jane Shore, in *Jane Shore*, with Barton as Lord Hastings.

December 13—Elvira, in *Pizarro*, with Barton as Rolla.

December 15—*Lear* (probably).

December 24—Matilda, in *The Bohemian Mother*.

December 25—*George Barnwell*.

December 29—Mrs. Clermont, in *Adrien and Orilla*, with Scott as Prince Altenberg. Also Theresa, in *Theresa, the Orphan of Geneva*, with Scott as Corwin.

February 5—*Adrien and Orilla*.

February 6—Desdemona, in *Othello*, with Barton as Othello, and also with Forbes and Mrs. Hillson.

February 9—*The Gambler's Fate*, with Caldwell as Beverley (so announced, but probably *The Gamester*).

February 13—Mrs. Haller, in *The Stranger*, with Caldwell as the Stranger.

February 26—Lady Randolph, in *Douglas*. Postponed from February 16, on account of Mrs. Duff's illness.

March 9—Portia, in the fourth act of *The Merchant of Venice*, with Scott as Shylock; Rose Redland, in *The Robber's Wife*.

In accordance with a custom which was much in vogue in that epoch, Mrs. Duff's stay at the American was broken into two "engagements," the first of which ended on December 25, 1832, and the second of which began on January 17, 1833. The object of this highly arbitrary division of what, after all, was a continuous engagement, was to get in the two "benefits", to which, under her contract, Mrs. Duff was entitled. The performance on December 29 of *Adrien and Orilla* was one of these; that of March 9 was the second. On the latter occasion, in addition to the pieces mentioned in the foregoing list, Caldwell, who fancied himself highly as a comedian, contributed one of his favorite impersonations—that of Sir Roderick Ramble in *Every One Has His Faults*, which was given a leading place on the bill,

with Mrs. Duff in support. Benefits were an important item in the budget of actors in those days; on such occasions most, if not all, of the receipts were turned over to the beneficiary. Mrs. Duff's eminence on the stage enabled her to exact the surrender of the entire box-office receipt at both of her benefits.

The characters impersonated by Mrs. Duff during her New Orleans visit had long been included in her repertory, but they were among her greatest and most admired. Nevertheless, one searches the New Orleans newspapers in vain for appropriate comment upon her performances. Even the scholarly and usually generous *Courier* withheld its opinion except on two occasions—Mrs. Duff's benefit on February 26, and that on March 9. In its issue of February 27, referring to the performance of the previous evening, the editor said:

The play of Douglas was performed at the American theater . . . to full boxes. The part of Lady Randolph was played by Mrs. Duff in her usual excellent manner, and the delight with which it was witnessed by the audience was testified by the oft-repeated applause.

On March 9, in its news section, the *Courier* noted:

This evening Mrs. Duff takes a benefit at the Camp street theater. The pieces selected for the occasion are Mrs. Inchbald's admired comedy called "Every One Has His Fault," the fourth act of "Shylock," and the interesting drama of "The Robber's Wife," in all of which Mrs. Duff will appear. This lady is always so well and favorably known to the community of New Orleans, that nothing from us could add to her reputation, and we hope they will not let this opportunity pass without showing how they appreciate true worth and talent.

Except for the editor's inability to quote the titles of two of the "pieces" correctly, and for obvious grammatical difficulties—both of which probably resulted from the fact that St. Rômes habitually wrote in French, and consequently expressed himself awkwardly in English—the paragraph is a good example of theatrical criticism as written in those days. Moreover, the *Courier* inserted in its editorial column on the same day the following additional tribute:

MRS. DUFF
(ARTIST)

This lady, whose talents are universally appreciated, and whose exertions during her residence in our city, have been so untiring and successful, takes her farewell benefit

this evening. The pieces selected will draw out her great histrionic powers, and afford a fine intellectual repast. On such an occasion none of the theaters in our sister cities would fail to be crowded. Our citizens have always been liberal patronizers of merit, and will not now be less generous than others.

Four years elapsed before Mrs. Duff was again seen in a New Orleans theater. By this time she had fixed her home permanently in New Orleans. Caldwell took advantage of that fact to try to induce her to take a place in his stock company at the American. Apparently, Mrs. Duff was already toying with the idea of withdrawing altogether from the stage, and the enterprising New Orleans manager had to content himself with two brief engagements, one in 1837 and the other in 1838—the last which the great actress is known to have filled. Mrs. Duff was no longer in the bloom of youth; hers had been a life of harsh and long-continued labor; she doubtless did not feel equal to the demands which a full participation in the life of the theater imposes. Moreover, the religious scruples with which she came eventually to regard her profession seem already to have made an impression on her mind. Perhaps even more potent in determining her attitude towards Caldwell's proposals, was the fact that she did not wish to compete with other talented women who had risen in the theater to challenge her supremacy. At any rate, the two engagements which she played at the American in the years above mentioned, were all that she would consent to undertake.

The calendar of Mrs. Duff's 1837 engagement was as follows:

April 17—*The Fatal Marriage*.

April 27—*The Stranger*.

April 29—*Macbeth*, followed by Mrs. Duff as Isabella.

May 2—Mrs. Duff in the role of Victorine.

May 3—Portions of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Venice Preserved*, and *Jane Shore*.

May 6—*The Golden Farmer*.

The plays given during Mrs. Duff's 1838 engagement were:

March 13—*Bertram*.

March 15—*King Lear*.

March 17—*Adelgetha*.

March 21—*The Apostate*.

March 22—*Macbeth*, followed by *Venus' Arms*.

March 23—*Merchant of Venice*.

March 24—Portions of *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Foundling of the Forest*, and *Jane Shore*.

May 18—*The Apostate*.

May 31—*The Stranger*.

The New Orleans newspapers practically ignored the 1837 engagement, but the following year their comment was extensive and appreciative to a degree without precedent in local journalism. The fullest and most intelligent notices of Mrs. Duff's performances were printed in the *Commercial Bulletin*. They may be quoted here as, among other things, illustrating the strides which dramatic criticism in New Orleans had made in the compass of a few years.

Concerning Mrs. Duff's opening performance the *Commercial Bulletin* said:

The attraction of Tuesday night—the important announcement that Mrs. Duff would make her reappearance at the Camp—awakened recollections of other days, when she wept sweet tears of pity for the sorrows of the gentle Cordelia and bitter ones of regret for the repentant Mrs. Haller. The night was not propitious, but the remembrance of Mrs. Duff's powers and the knowledge of Parsons' talents filled the house. Mrs. Duff appears in every way improved in health, and except for a slight cold, in every way more capable of sustaining the fatigues of her important roles than when we saw her last. It is impossible to describe her acting—the hushed stillness of the house, the clenched hands, the long-drawn breath, the quivering lips and humid eyes of the audience told of its effect. It was in vain that the stoutest nerves attempted to resist the sympathetic influence of her imaginary sorrows. We could wish never to see Bertram played again—we would have the impression made by Mrs. Duff, in all its beauties and horrors, and the beautiful Imogen, always appear to the eye of memory as when she threw herself "in utter desolation" on the bold breast of the terrible outlaw, Bertram: "A blighted lily on its icy bed."

In its issue of March 17 the *Commercial Bulletin* dwelt enthusiastically upon Mrs. Duff's performance of Cordelia, two nights earlier:

The performance answered our expectations and drew forth loud and repeated bursts of applause. Mrs. Duff seems to have lost none of her former charms as an actress. She represented Cordelia with the same taste and judgment as of yore, and has lost none of that magical power over the human heart that she was universally acknowledged to possess in the springtime of her career. There is the same freshness of spirit, the same delicate discrimination of judgment, the same awful power to rouse into action the human passions, as formerly. Time appears, rather, to have augmented her control over the susceptibilities of our nature, by imparting to her voice and articulation a mellow and tender plaintiveness.

Of *Adelgetha* the critic wrote: "Mrs. Duff's pantomime is the best we ever saw. There is a language in her silence, and her gestures are more intelligible than speech."

During this engagement Mrs. Duff was supported by the regular members of the American's stock company. Among them were Parsons (who was scarcely less famous as a preacher than as an actor), Madden, Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Judah, Mrs. Russell, Miss Maeder, and other more or less distinguished Thespians. Of their work the *Commercial Bulletin* had little to say that was flattering. "Parsons was not great as Lear. . . . He fails to maintain a uniformity of excellence throughout his performance." Foster "split the ear. . . . Judah's indecorousness and ignorance. . . . He dressed the deposed Emperor Michael as a Turk." And so on. Apparently, the year 1838 was one of Caldwell's off-years. He did not ordinarily have a stock company of such average low ability as that which was called on to act with the "American Siddons," as the press liked to designate her, in the final moments of her great career.

For this engagement at the American (or Camp, as it was now beginning to be called) was, indeed, Mrs. Duff's last appearance before the footlights. When the curtain fell on *The Stranger*, on May 31, 1838, she made her exit from the world where she had so long exercised an almost undisputed sovereignty. For

that day the *Commercial Bulletin* published the following announcement:

MRS. DUFF.

This lady has, since she became a resident of this city, been prominent in the cause of charity, by contributing her valuable professional services on several occasions to aid the destitute orphans and the Charleston sufferers by fire. The numerous friends of the Camp, and the friends of the legitimate drama will have an opportunity tonight to testify their estimation and appreciation of the distinguished lady, to whose benefit the occasion is appropriated. Let the accomplished beneficiary be greeted by an overflowing house.

But as to how the play went off, the press was obstinately silent. Probably no one, even the "accomplished beneficiary," realized that an end had come to a splendid chapter in American theatrical history. Thenceforward Mrs. Duff was no longer Mrs. Duff—she was the increasingly obscure New Orleans housewife whom I have endeavored to depict in the introductory paragraphs of this essay.

Mrs. Duff lost her husband in 1831. Duff died after a long illness, at the early age of forty-four, leaving an enviable reputation as an artist and as a man. Two years later the widow contracted an injudicious marriage with Charles Young, an actor once well-known in Boston and thereabouts. This union was almost immediately dissolved by divorce. The *Globe* writer says that it was contracted when Mrs. Duff, "oppressed with grief at her widowhood, and overwhelmed with the care and support of a numerous family," was in a state "bordering on insanity." If so, she recovered her mental health on the way home from the hasty and unconsidered ceremony, refused to enter the bridegroom's house, and within a few days instituted legal proceedings to annul the marriage. Her marriage to Seaver, celebrated in 1836, was evidently entered upon with a good deal more circumspection than marked its predecessor, with Yoang.

Seaver (or Sevier—he spelled the name that way, too!) was a native of one of the Eastern states. He was a brother of Benjamin W. Seaver, a theatrical man long identified with the Albany theater, and at one time a "dresser" to the elder Booth, in the years when that was a perilous post. Booth was absorbed in his characters long after he left the stage, and on one occasion was narrowly prevented from smiting his "dresser" hip

and thigh, under the impression that he was still crook-backed Richard, and Seaver another Richmond. This brother's connection with the theater evidently brought Seaver into contact with Mrs. Duff, though how or where this happened we do not know. We first hear of him in a letter from Mrs. Duff to Charles Page, with whom, it seems, she was involved in some intricate financial operations. Page held her note, and had in his possession some of the lady's furniture, probably as security for a loan. Seaver was to arrange with Page for the extension of the note and the sale of the furniture. Mrs. Duff also enlisted Seaver's services for the collection of cash due her from the elder Joseph Jefferson, father of the later, more celebrated comedian of the same name. How Seaver acquitted himself of these commissions is not in the record. That he satisfied the client is clear from what followed.

From the above-mentioned letter it appears that in December, 1835, Mrs. Duff was contemplating a tour through the South, but whether this extended beyond Washington, D. C., where she filled an engagement in the ensuing January, is not clear. However, shortly thereafter she was in New Orleans as Seaver's wife. Then for nearly twenty years that city was her home. "Her husband," says the writer whom we have so frequently quoted elsewhere, "idealized her and, it is said, furnished her with every facility for gratifying her generous inclinations. Whatever were his faults, or however inferior he was to her in taste or intellect, they were supposed to be the happiest of couples."

The foregoing quotation from the *Globe*, however, gives rather an erroneous notion of Seaver's professional success. His income was doubtless sufficient to meet his needs, but those needs were moderate, even in respect to Mrs. Seaver's philanthropic enterprises. He was, in fact, an industrious but obscure member of the bar of the Crescent City. Under the name Sevier (a spelling adopted probably in concession to the French influence then prevailing in New Orleans), he maintained law offices at the corner of St. Charles and Canal streets, in a building long since removed. The city directories from 1836 to 1854 indicate that he did business at this address till the latter year. He and his wife resided in a "neat cottage" on Canal Street, where they once entertained James Ries, one of Mr. Seaver's old friends of the glamorous Philadelphia days. Ries has left us a description

of the visit. The house was "handsomely furnished, and all its surroundings bore evidences of the taste and judgment of the owners." Here, too, Noah H. Ludlow, the famous theatrical manager, then head of a prosperous theater in New Orleans, was a guest. Ludlow says in his memoirs that Seaver was of "good general intelligence, not ill-looking, with much Yankee shrewdness," and that he was about forty years old when he married. Ludlow saw Mrs. Seaver occasionally from 1840 to 1845, but never heard of her attending the theater or associating with persons connected with the stage.

We have the record of but a single lawsuit in which Seaver was engaged in New Orleans. That was the case of Dr. Stillman, a compounder or vendor of patent medicines, who believed that someone or other had invaded his rights to "Stillman's Extract of Sarsaparilla" and "Stillman's Fancy Pills." Seaver was engaged for the plaintiff, and won his case amidst a good deal of merriment. He had a peculiar tone of voice, and in his argument repeated the phrase, "Stillman's celebrated sarsaparilla and pills," with a curious, comic emphasis, or "twang," as the local press described it, "traditionally of New England." Even the judge laughed, and the jury enjoyed the joke so much that it brought in a verdict without leaving its seats, by way of expressing its appreciation of the entertainment afforded by the Doctor and his advocate. Stillman was something of a character. He dressed in the extreme of fashion, and attracted a good deal of attention whenever he walked the streets. Mat C. Field, a once famous New Orleans journalist, wrote a farce about the Doctor, called *Schinderella, or The Little Dutch Sleeper*, which was produced with riotous applause at the American Theater. Stillman was in the audience, and enjoyed as fully as the rest, the satire of which he was made the butt. And why not? For Miss Place played the title rôle, and the great Ben DeBar was the Dr. Stillman of the occasion.

Ireland says that marriage did not terminate Mrs. Duff's (or Mrs. Seaver's) professional activities, but even before that event, she had begun to experience a distaste for the theater and all it stood for. This was mixed up with a feeling that the stage was no place where permanent spiritual satisfaction were to be obtained. More and more religion dominated her interests. Not long after closing the 1838 engagement at the Camp, she re-

nounced the Catholic faith, in which she had been reared, and became a member of the Methodist Church. With the usual zeal of a convert, she took up the work of her new church, was active in the Sunday School, in the Temperance Society, in prayer meetings, in the distribution of tracts. She became the center of a small, enthusiastic religious circle. But she could not altogether blot out the memory of those earlier, glorious days when her name echoed around the world. Ries tells us, that, in the course of his conversation with her, he referred to William Wood and other actors with whom she had been associated in her prime; whereupon "her eyes brightened, and the love which had long lain dormant and at peace seemed for a moment aroused. The actress was herself again, and the scenes of the past, her days of triumph, were all gone over, but more like the recital of a dream than the relation of a once mighty reality. It was, however, but a flash of the former glow of genius. 'Tis past now,' she said; 'that was a worldly life; the present, and I hope the future, my heavenly life'." Never again, so far as we know, did she permit herself to speak of those vanished days, but who can doubt that, in spite of conscientious efforts to repress them, these memories kept a place in her heart to the end?

The Seavers dwelt happily in New Orleans till 1854. Then it became necessary for them to leave the city. Seaver had all the New England prejudices regarding slavery, and as the abolitionist movement gathered force in the northern states, and feeling on the subject grew more intense in the South, his views, expressed with too great frankness, made him unpopular. His business disappeared; his personal safety was at stake. It is supposed that he and his wife fled to Texas, and that idea has found a place in many of the books and articles that have been written about Mrs. Duff. Seaver apparently went to Texas alone. There was some sort of agreement of separation between him and his wife; at least, they never met again after leaving New Orleans. But what happened was veiled in a mystery which was not lifted till long after death had taken both protagonists in a very singular episode.

Let us quote again from the *Boston Globe*:

Mr. and Mrs. Seaver departed from the city where the changed actress had enjoyed such deep religious happiness, ostensibly for Texas. And here comes the shadow over her movements which, to the public eye, has never been removed.

Years passed by, and inquiries began to be made as to what had become of Mrs. Duff. Her children, who were asked, could not tell; members of old-time theatrical families—her former associates—were applied to in vain. The Warrens, Jeffersons, Placides, Wallacks, Blakes, Fishers, Mestayers, Barry, Gilbert, and innumerable other celebrities could shed no light upon her fate. Suppositions were made that she had died in Texas, unknown to her family or friends. Finally it was discovered, a few months ago (this was written in 1875), by the persevering efforts of several old admirers, that, instead of visiting Texas, Mrs. Duff, unaccompanied by her husband, had reached the residence of a widowed daughter in New York, where, after long suffering from an inward cancer, she was seized with a hemorrhage which resulted in her death on the 5th of September, 1857, in the sixty-third year of her age.

These circumstances might not cause any special remark, but the silence which rested for seventeen years on the grave of so distinguished an actress—unbroken even to the ears of living children and grandchildren—is probably the most remarkable event in American dramatic history. Mr. Seaver was not with her at the time of her decease, but he is known to have died within the following year, and a near relative of his recently stated that his widow (Mrs. Duff) was probably still living in New Orleans. One of her former intimate friends, a well-known dramatic historian, wrote to a gentleman in 1864: "Mrs. Duff must still be living, though at an advanced age. She could not have passed away without my knowing it."

The daughter whose home in New York afforded Mrs. Duff her final refuge was Mme. Reilleux, said to have been her last surviving daughter. This lady died suddenly, and the bereavement was more than the already debilitated constitution of her mother could withstand. It was the shock of this event which induced the hemorrhage to which Mrs. Duff succumbed. Mme. Reilleux seems to have shared her mother's later notions about the stage. At any rate, she carefully concealed the fact that Mrs. Seaver was other than she seemed, a little old lady, immersed in pious occupations, with thoughts turned heavenward, and none but proper and Puritanical memories to cherish. It was a strange attitude to take towards one of the noblest of the arts, but one widely prevalent in those days, when a connection with the theater was a social handicap. Mme. Reilleux was buried in Greenwood cemetery, in Brooklyn; and there, too, the remains of one of the most illustrious artists of her generation were laid.

Few of those who pass the spot even at the present day realize that, under a simple headstone inscribed "Mother and Grandmother," lies concealed the last episode in a remarkable history.

Mrs. Duff was the mother of ten children, of whom all were born to her marriage to Duff. There were no children by her union with Seaver. Seven of the ten survived to maturity. The eldest son, James Lenville Duff, was a remarkably handsome man, and had rather more than average talent as an actor. He was particularly well-known in the western part of the country. He died at the age of thirty, before his abilities had really been tested. The next son, Thomas Thatcher Duff, was also noted for his good looks. He, too, was connected with the theater. At one time he was a member of the stock company at the old Broadway Theater, in New York City. He made a reputation as a manager, as well as an actor. Eventually, however, he abandoned the profession, and took up the practice of law in Quincy, Illinois.

Mrs. Duff's eldest child, Mary, was a very beautiful woman. She was twice married—first, to an actor named Adams, and, secondly, to J. G. Porter—and was exceedingly unhappy with both of them. In early life she was regarded as a charming actress. We have records of two visits paid by her to New Orleans. The first took place in 1845. She appeared at the American (or Camp) Theater, in an engagement which began on November 16 and terminated on December 18. During this time she played *Pizarro*, *Hunting the Turtle*, *One Hour*, Therese in *The Orphan of Geneva*, Isabella in *The Fatal Marriage*, *Tom Cringle's Log*, *El Hyder*, *The Conquest of Tarante*, *Timour the Tartar*, *Damon and Pythias*, *Nick of the Woods*, *Tekeli*, and *Father and Daughter*. This list, so far as it shows anything, indicates the variety of her talents, ranging, as it did, from her mother's famous rôles of Therese and Isabella, to the "horse" shows, like *Timour*, which were so extraordinarily popular in those days.

Mary Duff's next New Orleans engagement was in January, 1846. In addition to such standard dramas as *The Lady of Lyons* and *The Hunchback*, she was seen in the famous "horse" drama of *Mazeppa*. Of this play the *Picayune* observed that it proved "so attractive that the management [of the American-Camp] have found it to their interest to perform it nightly." It was "given in a style which elicits the warmest applause." We should

also mention her performance of *Richard No. 3*, a burlesque of the Shakespearian play, in which two local scenes were introduced—one of the Poydras Market, and the other, of Canal Street, "painted especially for the piece."

Mrs. Duff's three remaining children were never on the stage. They included two sons, John and William Francis, and a daughter, Matilda, who was the Mme. Reilleux, mentioned above. We shall have something to say of William Francis below.

During her long residence in New Orleans Mrs. Seaver amused herself with literature. At her death she left a mass of manuscript—chiefly little poems for her children and grandchildren, and a large number of letters. She also wrote an elaborate disquisition on the Lord's Prayer, and a religious novel, said not to have been without merit; but neither of these works was ever published. These compositions, particularly the verses, reflected episodes in her life. Ireland quotes two of her poems, one of which, *Impromptu to a Wild Violet*, was written in New Orleans in June, 1852:

Beautiful violet, child of the shade,
Oh that like thee I had been made
To dwell in some secluded glade,
And there, unseen, to blossom and fade.

Oh how I love the forest wild,
Where the wood-dove, cooing and mild,
Mourns no lost or absent child.
She with her brood and loving mate
Is more blest than the queenly state
Ever made woman, whose fond, troubled heart
Is forced from all that she loves to part.

I know one doomed to bear such a wound,
As each succeeding year comes 'round.
She lives, if breath gives life, is cold and proud,
Nor speaks her many griefs and wrongs aloud.

One also suspects the mother's pen in a curious composition which was laid before the City Council of what was then the Second Municipality of New Orleans, in 1847. It seems that in that year Mrs. Duff's son, William Francis, aspired to a position

on the police force. His petition, addressed to the authorities who had the power of appointment, was as follows:

To His Honor, Recorder Baldwin:

Since begging is the order of the day,
This precedent I'm loath to disobey,
Lest office seekers deem me but a goose
And stun my ears with laughter and abuse.
For there's no crime so serious (I find),
As to maintain the dictates of one's mind,
For one must do just what the people teach,
Or be proscribed and censured for the breach.
Then, not to give them cause of me to say
I was against the usage of the day,
When all men beg and tell their thoughts in rhymes,
An humble prayer I purpose to indite,
And ask forgiveness if I do not right;
For so unused am I to ask a place,
I find me wanting in a beggar's grace.
And as the goose-quill glides smoothly along,
The prayer stops short and changes to a song.
Then, lest the end, or object, or intent,
Be likewise lost and all my rhymes be spent,
I will go faster to avoid a botch—
I'd—if you please!—be Sergeant of the Watch.
And if your Honor listens to my prayer,
Prayers more devout will bring you ambient air,
Far, far beyond those rolling worlds on high,
When dwell the unfathomable mystery,
And bear aloft, as on an angel's wing,
The thanks I feel, but language cannot sing.
But if you cannot with my wish comply,
I am content, nor ask the reason why.
For let me say, repeat it o'er and o'er,
Your Honor's wisdom is your servant's law.
To this I humbly bow, as guide enough.
Your servant truly, William Francis Duff.

The Council met on May 4, 1847, and it is gratifying to know that this unique application was immediately and unanimously approved, and Duff was commissioned Sergeant. His subsequent history is unknown.

✓ THE POLITICAL CAREER OF ISAAC JOHNSON,
GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA, 1846-1850¹

By SIDNEY JOSEPH AUCOIN

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND FORMATIVE YEARS, 1803-1828

Isaac Johnson comes to America— Settles in the Natchez District— Marries Mary Routh— Father of twelve children— Marriages and family connections of children— Isaac Johnson, *alcalde*— Moves to Bayou Sara— Acquires “Troy” plantation— Family of John Hunter Johnson— John H. Johnson and the West Florida Rebellion— John H. Johnson, Sheriff and Judge of the Parish of Feliciana— Early life of young Isaac Johnson— Feliciana becomes prosperous— Isaac Johnson, Executor of his father’s estate— Becomes lawyer— Marriage to Charlotte McDermott.

About the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century a party of six young men left Liverpool, England, to come to America.² Among them was Isaac Johnson, son of John Johnson, an Episcopal minister, and Margaret Hunter. Upon reaching America the group probably bought horses and rode horseback until they reached the headwaters of the Ohio, then using the popular method of travel of the time, floated down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in barges, and settled on the bluff lands near Natchez.³

Shortly after his arrival Isaac Johnson set about the task of making a home in the Natchez District of British West Florida. In 1777 he received from the British government a grant of one thousand acres of land, located on Second Creek.⁴ Later he acquired a second tract of three hundred and fifty acres on Cole’s Creek,⁵ which had been made to another party prior to the Spanish conquest.⁶ Several years later, in 1789 and 1794, Johnson received two more grants, of eight hundred and eleven hundred acres, respectively, both located on Cole’s Creek.⁷

¹ Master’s thesis in History, Louisiana State University, 1942.

² Stanley C. Arthur and George C. H. de Kermion, *Old Families of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1931), 166.

³ Stanley C. Arthur, *The Story of the West Florida Rebellion* (St. Francisville, 1935), 17.

⁴ *American State Papers, Public Lands* (Washington, 1832-1861), I, 864. Second Creek is located northeast of the present city of Natchez, Mississippi.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 618. Cole’s Creek is located southwest of Natchez. The locations of this and Second Creek may be found on a map of the State of Mississippi prepared by the Works Progress Administration in 1938.

⁶ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 16.

⁷ *American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 867, 891.

Meanwhile romance had entered into the life of Isaac Johnson, and he was married to Mary Routh.⁸ Miss Routh had used the same method of transportation as had Isaac Johnson in coming to the Natchez District. She had come from Virginia with her two brothers and had settled here.⁹ The life of this couple and the remainder of the English-speaking planters of the Natchez District was a happy and prosperous one.¹⁰ To Isaac and Mary Johnson were born twelve children, ten of whom, five girls and five boys, reached maturity.¹¹ The eldest, John Hunter Johnson, married Thenia Munson; their fourth child, a son, Isaac, is the subject of this study. The second child of Isaac and Mary Johnson, Ann Waugh Johnson, married Gilbert Mills, brother of John H. Mills, who reputedly was the founder of the town of Bayou Sara. Isaac Johnson, Jr.,¹² the third child, married Melissa Jane Williams. In order there followed Charles Grandpré Johnson,¹³ who married Anna Ruffin Dawson, and later Eliza Eddington of England; Joseph Eugenius Johnson,¹⁴ who married Martha Lane; William Gayoso Johnson,¹⁵ who married Eliza Collins Johnson, no relation; Elizabeth Johnson, who married Thomas Wither Chinn, who was later elected to Congress from the Third Louisiana Congressional District.¹⁶ The tenth and last

⁸ Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 166.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁰ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹² Isaac Johnson, Jr., named for his father, was a rollicking jolly fellow who was captain of a line of barges making regular trips between Bayou Sara and New Orleans. He was noted far and wide for his daredevil bravery. He was the Isaac Johnson who, as major of the Bayou Sara Cavalry, led the cheering patriots who captured the Spanish fort at Baton Rouge in September, 1810. He lowered the Spanish flag and rode horseback through the streets dragging the flag in the dust. He married Melissa Jane Williams, and to them were born three daughters who married three brothers named Chaney. Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 169.

¹³ Charles Grandpré Johnson, the third son of Isaac Johnson and Mary Routh, became a planter and married, October 20, 1815, Anna Ruffin Dawson, the beautiful and gifted sister of John B. Dawson. He was a tall, finely-proportioned man, and captain of the Feliciana Dragoons, the troop of men from the West Florida Parishes that rendered splendid service to Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans. The present J. Hereford Percy of Baton Rouge is one of his descendants. He died in West Baton Rouge Parish on November 1, 1854. Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 171.

¹⁴ Joseph Eugenius Johnson, fourth son of Isaac and Mary Johnson, was noted for his fondness for literature and writing. During the West Florida Rebellion he was made sheriff of New Feliciana. In the War of 1812 he was detailed to captain the home guards because the slaves of the Feliciana section became so unruly that it required military patrols to keep them in subjection. He served in the Battle of New Orleans and transported British prisoners of war to Natchez. He was married to Martha Lane and was the father of three children. Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 171.

¹⁵ William Gayoso Johnson, fifth son of Isaac Johnson and Mary Routh, married Eliza Collins Johnson, a daughter of William Garret Johnson, no relation. To them were born eight children.

¹⁶ Thomas Wither Chinn was a Whig representative in Congress from the Third Louisiana District. He had held other offices, among them district judge in 1826. He served in the Twenty-sixth Congress, March 4, 1839-March 3, 1841. He was later appointed minister to the Two Sicilies by President Zachary Taylor and served until October, 1849, when he resigned. Judge Chinn was a sugar planter, a well-known financier of his day, and prominent in politics. He died May 22, 1852. Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 172; *Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1911* (Washington, 1913), 543.

child was Martha Johnson, who married Nathaniel Wells Pope, the friend and clerk of John James Audubon.¹⁷

When Spain acquired West Florida in 1779, Isaac Johnson became very friendly with the commandants and governors. Two of his sons bear names of Spanish governors, Charles Grandpré Johnson being named for Don Carlos de Grandpré,¹⁸ Spanish Governor of West Florida, and William Gayoso Johnson for Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, Governor of West Florida and later of Louisiana.¹⁹ That the friendship was mutual is borne out by the fact that Governor Carlos de Grandpré appointed Isaac Johnson as one of the *alcaldes* or judges among the English population of the Natchez District.²⁰

On his land grant on Second Creek Isaac Johnson went into the lumber business, forming a partnership with his son-in-law, John H. Mills.²¹ This proved to be a very profitable business, but the sawmill was washed away by a spring flood, and Mills persuaded Johnson to migrate with him to the Bayou Sara region of Feliciana.²² So he moved his family to this territory, where he settled and developed a plantation on the Mississippi River, bounded on the east by Thompson's Creek.²³ This plantation, called "Troy", granted to him by the Spanish government, passed into the hands of John H. Johnson and Joseph E. Johnson at the death of their father.²⁴

¹⁷ Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 167.

¹⁸ Don Carlos de Grandpré was French; he had commanded troops during the French domination of Louisiana. When Louisiana was ceded to Spain in 1763, Grandpré offered his services to Spain and was placed in charge of the Pointe Coupée sector. He enjoyed the confidence of many of the planters. He was later accused of French sympathies and removed from his post. He went to Havana, where he died. Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 26, 29.

¹⁹ Manuel Gayoso de Lemos was born in 1752. He was educated in England and learned to speak English perfectly. He was made Spanish Governor of Natchez in 1787, where his wife died in 1789. In 1797 he was remarried, and in the same year he succeeded Carondelet as Governor-General of Louisiana and the Floridas. He held this post until his death in 1799. Gayoso was well liked and had a reputation for honesty, a rarity among Spanish officials. James A. Padgett, editor, "The West Florida Revolution of 1810, as Told in the Letters of John Rhea, Fulwar Skipwith, Ruben Kemper, and Others," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXI (1938), 161. This article will be cited hereinafter as Padgett, "West Florida Revolution."

²⁰ Ibid.; *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott, Late Commissioner on Behalf of the United States, . . . for Determining the Boundary between the United States and the Possessions of His Catholic Majesty in America . . .* (Philadelphia, 1803), 195.

²¹ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*. 17.

²² Ibid., 18.

²³ *American State Papers, Public Lands*, I, 903; III, 42, 44, 53, 55, 58.

²⁴ West Feliciana Parish Inventory Records, (Courthouse, St. Francisville, Louisiana,) 1815-1819, pp. 338-343.

Here at "Troy" lived John Hunter Johnson and his wife, Thenia Munson. To them were born ten children, four girls and six boys:

Margaret Johnson, born March 12, 1799;
 William H. Johnson, born June 30, 1800;
 Mary Johnson, born November 4, 1801;
 Isaac Johnson, born November 1, 1803;
 Robert Johnson, born April 3, 1805;
 Joseph E. Johnson, born October 4, 1807;
 Charles L. Johnson, born August 1, 1808;
 Ann Mills Johnson, born March 8, 1810;
 Tullia Robinson Johnson, born January 26, 1814;
 John H. Johnson, Jr., born December 16, 1815.²⁵

John Hunter Johnson, who had been educated by his father, soon became a man of considerable importance in Feliciana.²⁶ There is little doubt that he was the brains and motivating force behind the rebellion of the Feliciana planters against Spanish tyranny in 1810.²⁷ Aided by his aggressive younger brothers, Isaac Jr., Charles, and Joseph, he assumed the leadership of the Rebellion.²⁸

When independence was attained, a government was organized on November 19, 1810. The new Republic was divided into five districts, with each district sending one senator and one or more representatives to the new capital at St. Francisville. This government lasted only seventy-four days, counting from the date of their Declaration of Independence from Spain.²⁹ Early in December, 1810, Governor Charles C. C. Claiborne began to put into operation the instructions of President James Madison by taking possession of West Florida as a part of the Territory of Orleans. Many residents of West Florida preferred to remain independent, establish a successful government, and then apply directly to the United States for admission into the Union as a

²⁵ Interview with Mr. J. Hereford Percy, who obtained his information from Mrs. Langhorn of Waco, Texas, who had in her possession the Johnson Family Bible. This Bible had been in the possession of Charles L. Johnson who died on March 29, 1851.

²⁶ Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 168.

²⁷ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; Padgett, "West Florida Revolution." *loc. cit.*, XXI, 161. He was active in calling the convention in West Florida, and he was placed in command at Bayou Sara. He became a member of the Committee of Safety and of the Executive Committee appointed by the convention. He was later elected senator from Feliciana. He took an active part in annexing West Florida to the United States.

²⁹ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 128, 149.

State.³⁰ The tiny republic came to an end on December 6, 1810, when West Florida was incorporated into the Territory of Orleans.³¹

Shortly after Louisiana was admitted into the Union in 1812, the Florida Parishes as far east as the Pearl River were added to the new State, and John H. Johnson became sheriff of the Seventh Superior Court District of Louisiana.³² While he was sheriff, John H. continued the practice of law and attended to the duties of the office of sheriff as well.³³ He continued in this capacity until 1815, when he became Judge of the Parish of Feliciana, which position he occupied until his death on February 18, 1819.³⁴

Into this courageous and influential family Isaac Johnson, the subject of this study, was born on November 1, 1803.³⁵ He first saw the light of day at "Troy", the plantation home of the Johnsons; and there he lived through the early part of his life. Of his education very little is known, but that he was a well-read and intelligent gentleman is reflected in his speeches delivered in his later life.³⁶ Regarding the education of young Isaac Johnson there are two distinct possibilities. He may have attended the academy established near St. Francisville in 1811 by Clark Woodruff. This institution gave instruction in English grammar, elocution, composition, arithmetic, penmanship, surveying, navigation, algebra, measuring heights and distances, Latin, and Greek.³⁷ On the other hand, his parents may have entrusted his instruction to a private tutor. The latter, possibly, is the case, since it was the custom in those times for planter families to employ tutors for their children.³⁸

During the years of Isaac Johnson's early manhood the Parish of Feliciana came to be one of the most prosperous sections of Louisiana.³⁹ This subdivision of the state continued as

³⁰ Isaac J. Cox, *The West Florida Controversy, 1798-1813* (Baltimore, 1918), 416.

³¹ Arthur, *West Florida Rebellion*, 147.

³² *Ibid.*, 140, 149; West Feliciana Notarial Records, A, 1-39.

³³ St. Francisville, Louisiana, *Time-Piece*, May 7, October 3, 1812.

³⁴ West Feliciana Parish Notarial Records, A, 1-39; West Feliciana Parish Inventory Records, 1819-1824, p. 338; Succession of John Hunter Johnson, Box 51.

³⁵ Interview with Mr. J. Hereford Percy. Some authors give 1805 as the year of his birth, but the above date, copied from the Johnson Family Bible, seems to be authentic.

³⁶ New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, March 16, 1853; New Orleans *Daily Delta*, March 16, 17, 18, 1853.

³⁷ Notice in *Time-Piece*, October 24, 1811.

³⁸ Edwin Adams Davis, "Social and Economic Life in West Feliciana Parish, 1830-1850, As Reflected in the Diary of Bennet H. Barrow" (Doctoral dissertation, 1936, Louisiana State University), 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

the Parish of Feliciana until 1824, when an act of the Legislature divided it into the two parishes of East and West Feliciana. East Feliciana included all land between the Amite River and Thompson's Creek, while West Feliciana comprised the region between the Mississippi River and Thompson's Creek.⁴⁰ In 1825 one editor wrote:

We can see no reason why St. Francisville should not, ere long, become one of the most wealthy and thriving towns on the Mississippi; . . . As a port, none in Louisiana commands a greater extent of back country; and surely, in no part of the State can a greater body of good land be found.⁴¹

By 1830 this prophecy was fulfilled, and West Feliciana had become one of the richest parishes in Louisiana.⁴² In these years of Isaac Johnson's development into manhood life in West Feliciana meant living in the true sense of the word. Here was a true picture of the South of antebellum days, with grace, dignity, and well-being completely permeating the daily lives of the planters and their families.⁴³

When John Hunter Johnson died he left a large estate; he owned all the land now included in the town of St. Francisville.⁴⁴ But, like so many planters of that day, he also left numerous obligations. To satisfy his creditors it was necessary to sell the greater portion of the property.⁴⁵ Since Thenia Johnson, the widow, whose education had been sadly neglected, was unable to look after all the matters of the large estate, Joseph E. Johnson, a brother of John H. Johnson, was named executor of the will and tutor to young Isaac.⁴⁶ However, in 1828 the task of administering his father's estate was assumed by young Isaac Johnson, who had, by this time, become a successful lawyer in his own right.⁴⁷

Isaac Johnson began to practice law in 1828.⁴⁸ His first appearance in the Notarial Records of West Feliciana Parish was on June 6, of that year.⁴⁹ It is difficult to determine just how Isaac Johnson acquired his legal training, or the exact date

⁴⁰ *Louisiana Acts*, 1824, pp. 25-34.

⁴¹ *St. Francisville Louisiana Journal*, October 22, 1825.

⁴² Davis, "Social and Economic Life in West Feliciana Parish," 11.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Map of the Town of St. Francisville, in *West Feliciana Parish Plat Book* (New Orleans, 1870), 21.

⁴⁵ West Feliciana Parish Probate Records, 1824-1827, p. 169; Succession of John Hunter Johnson, Box 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Idem.*, West Feliciana Parish Notarial Records, Aa, 251 (June 26, 1828).

⁴⁸ West Feliciana Parish Notarial Records, Aa, 251 (June 26, 1828).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

of his admission to the bar, since accurate records of this nature were not kept for the years prior to 1846.⁵⁰ It seems logical to assume, in the absence of such facts, that Johnson studied law either in the office of his father, John H. Johnson, or that of his uncle, Joseph E. Johnson. Both these men were successful lawyers, and both were influential in the parish from the time of the West Florida Rebellion of 1810 to their deaths. Isaac Johnson practiced his profession independently until 1830.⁵¹ In that year he was taken in as a partner by his uncle, Joseph E. Johnson, and his brother, William H. Johnson.⁵² In 1832 a partnership was formed by Isaac and his brother, Joseph E. Johnson.⁵³

Before Isaac Johnson had securely established himself in the practice of his profession, he was married to Charlotte McDermott on January 15, 1828.⁵⁴ To them were born three children, Ann Chase Johnson, Charles F. Johnson, and Walter T. Johnson.⁵⁵ In 1854 Ann Johnson married Dr. Percy Sargent.⁵⁶ This marriage lasted for two years, when Ann Sargent died, leaving no heirs.⁵⁷ Walter T. Johnson died in 1853, seven months after the death of his father. He was only twelve years of age at the time.⁵⁸ In August of that same year Charles F. Johnson died.⁵⁹ Thus none of the children of Isaac Johnson left any heirs, and no one remained in that branch of the family to perpetuate the name and to carry on the rich heritage handed down to them by the three generations of their ancestors in West Feliciana.

CHAPTER II

SUCCESSFUL LAWYER AND MEMBER OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE

Member of the legal profession in West Feliciana—
Advances in State Militia— Takes part in local politics—
General appearance of Isaac Johnson— Character of Isaac
Johnson— Elected to lower house of the State Legislature—
Alexander Barrow, colleague of Isaac Johnson— Named to

⁵⁰ Letter from Louis P. Niklaus, Clerk of the Supreme Court, to author, dated July 14, 1941.

⁵¹ *Louisiana Journal*, October 4, 1828; Succession Record of John Hunter Johnson, Box 51. (January 11, 1829).

⁵² Succession of John Hunter Johnson, Voucher No. 3.

⁵³ West Feliciana Parish Notarial Records, F, 149.

⁵⁴ West Feliciana Parish Marriage Records, VI. Charlotte McDermott was the daughter of Bryan McDermott whose father, Patrick McDermott, founded Tunica in West Feliciana Parish. Patrick McDermott built "Waverly", the present beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Lester of Bains, Louisiana. Bryan McDermott was prominently mentioned in the affairs of the West Florida Rebellion. Padgett, "West Florida Revolution," loc. cit., XXI, 162; James A. Padgett, editor, "Official Records of the West Florida Revolution and Republic," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXI (1938), 707.

⁵⁵ Succession Record of Isaac Johnson, Box 51.

⁵⁶ West Feliciana Parish Marriage Records, XIV.

⁵⁷ West Feliciana Parish Inventory Records, 1852-1869, G, 199-203.

⁵⁸ Grace Church Records, A, 215.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

the Judiciary Committee— Special Committee to study the South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification— Seeks to amend the charter of the West Feliciana Railroad Company— Ferry franchise for Vanwinkle— Second session of the Legislature— Again appointed to the Judiciary Committee— Interest in internal improvements— Desire to create a Criminal Court in East and West Feliciana— Returns to his legal duties— Member of executive committee on abolition— Committee of Public Safety— Acquires slaves— Becomes landowner— Hires out his slaves— Residence of Isaac Johnson.

As Isaac Johnson became better established in his profession, he became very popular as a man and a lawyer.¹ It was not long before his name began to appear in the records of important events and happenings in West Feliciana.² During this period the law firm of which he was a member established an enviable reputation. Though the greater part of their practice was in West Feliciana, they also practiced in East Feliciana. A study of the District Court Records of both parishes reveals that in eighty-five percent of the cases presented to court by Johnson and Johnson judgments were rendered in favor of their clients. Apparently the line between criminal and civil practice was as clearly drawn then as it is today, for no record could be found of Isaac Johnson having participated as attorney in any criminal trial.³

A reputation as a good lawyer in these two parishes during those years was quite an accomplishment in itself, when the individual practitioners are considered.⁴ Among the men practicing law in the Felicianas at that time were: John L. Lobdell, Thomas G. Morgan, Robert Haile, Robert C. Wickliffe, Lafayette Saunders, Archibald Harelson, James M. Bradford, Solomon W. Downs, James J. Weems, and Allen G. Scott, to mention only a few.⁵ For a man to win his legal spurs in competition with such an array of talent was a great achievement, as many of these men later attained positions of great importance in local, state, and national affairs.⁶

¹ Arthur Meynier, Jr., *Louisiana Biographies* (4 parts, New Orleans, 1883), Part I, p. 28.

² *Baton Rouge Gazette*, November 3, 1827.

³ Briefs of Cases in West Feliciana Parish Court, 1828-1838 (Courthouse, St. Francisville); Briefs of Cases in East Feliciana Parish, District Court Records, Civil Suits, 1831-1840, Boxes 7-8, Nos. 443-954 (Louisiana State University Archives, Baton Rouge).

⁴ West Feliciana Parish District Court Fee Book, 1827-1837, pp. 1-603.

⁵ *Ibid.* Brief biographies of these men may be found in Elrie Robinson, *Early Feliciana Politics* (St. Francisville, 1936); Mary L. McLure, *Louisiana Leaders, 1830-1860* (Shreveport, 1935).

⁶ Louise Butler, "West Feliciana: A Glimpse of Its History," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, VII (1924), 90-120.

Following in the footsteps of his uncle, Isaac Johnson, Jr., young Johnson soon entered upon a military career. He began this phase of his life as aide-de-camp to Major General John B. Dawson.⁷ By 1835 he had advanced to the rank of Colonel in the Militia.⁸ By the time he was a candidate for governor he had risen to the position of Major-General of the Third Division of the Louisiana Militia.⁹

After 1827 Johnson had begun to take an active part in local politics. His first appearance in such a role was as a member of a committee to further the candidacy of Judge Thomas Butler.¹⁰ Butler was beginning his campaign for election to Congress from the Third Louisiana District.¹¹ However, Butler ran a bad second in the election held in July, 1828.¹² Thus Isaac Johnson's first venture into politics ended in failure. To be sure he was not a candidate, but he had supported the candidacy of a loser. Butler was again nominated by the Whigs in 1844, but he withdrew from the contest before the date of the election.¹³

For a time it seems that Johnson was satisfied to stay out of politics, but not for long, for three years after his first venture he was prominently mentioned as a possible candidate for state senator from the two Felicianas. This political boom did not materialize, because shortly it became known that he had refused to present his candidacy to the people of the two parishes.¹⁴ However, the fact that he refused this opportunity did not seem to discourage his friends, for in 1833 he was mentioned as a possible

⁷ *Louisiana Journal*, July 28, 1827.

General John B. Dawson was born in Tennessee in 1800 and came to Feliciana about 1817. When he was seventeen years of age he married Isaac Johnson's sister, Margaret. To them was born a daughter Ann, who became the wife of Robert C. Wickliffe, Governor of Louisiana, 1856-1860. Dawson was a member of the Legislature, and was a candidate for governor in 1834, but was defeated by Edward D. White. He was elected to Congress in 1840 from the Third Louisiana District. He was appointed postmaster at New Orleans, and served from April 10 to December 19, 1843. He died in St. Francisville, June 26, 1845. Robinson, *Early Louisiana Politics*, 59-65; *Biographical Congressional Directory*, 1774-1911, p. 597.

⁸ *St. Francisville and Bayou Sara Advertiser*, October 27, 1835.

⁹ *New Orleans Louisiana Courier*, September 1, 1845.

¹⁰ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, November 3, 1827.

Thomas Butler was born in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, April 14, 1785. He came to Feliciana in 1811, and became parish judge in 1812. He was elected to Congress in 1818 and served until 1821. He was a candidate for Congress in 1828, but was defeated. In 1822 and again in 1840 he served as district judge. He was a prominent and successful planter, owning twelve cotton and sugar plantations. Miss Louise Butler, his granddaughter, presently occupies "The Cottage," West Feliciana plantation home of Thomas Butler. Miss Butler is a local historian of some note. Judge Thomas Butler died on August 7, 1847, and was buried near his home in West Feliciana Parish. *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1927* (Washington, 1928), 770.

¹¹ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, November 3, 1827.

¹² *Ibid.*, July 19, 1828.

¹³ *Ibid.*, May 25, 1844.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 13, 1831.

candidate for Congress from his district.¹⁵ He was not nominated, however, as no further mention of his candidacy can be found.

In the intervening years Johnson made quite an impression on the people of West Feliciana. He grew to be a good-looking man, possessed of many fine traits of character. Because of his personality and moderate views, it may be truthfully said that, while he had a host of friends, he had no enemies. He came to be identified with the Democrats, but was not a strict partisan in his political views. On all issues his viewpoint could be classed as moderate.¹⁶ In view of his courteous and gentlemanly manners, amiability, industry, and unquestionable integrity, it is not surprising that official position sought him, instead of his seeking the position. In his political career he did not have to depend upon party support for success. Though not possessed of remarkable abilities, he was the type of man who inspired trust and confidence.¹⁷ Possessed of all these fine qualities, it was not long before Isaac Johnson was elected to office by his friends.

His first personal political venture resulted in his election to the lower house of the General Assembly in 1833,¹⁸ for a two-year term. His fellow representative from West Feliciana was Alexander Barrow, who later was elected a United States Senator from Louisiana.¹⁹ When the Legislature convened, Johnson was named to serve on the Judiciary Committee.²⁰ Shortly thereafter he was named a member of a special committee to study and report upon that part of Governor A. B. Roman's message relating to the South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification and other matters connected with the heated controversy then existing between that state and the federal government.²¹ This special committee of ten were unable to agree on the matter, and two separate sets of resolutions were submitted to the House on February 4, 1833. Thomas C. Nicholls, chairman of the special committee, made the majority report, while James Porter submitted the report

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, May 4, 1833.

¹⁶ Meynier, *Louisiana Biographies*, Pt. I, p. 27.

¹⁷ Editorial in *Daily Picayune*, March 15, 1853.

¹⁸ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1833, p. 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Alexander Barrow was United States Senator from Louisiana from 1841 to his death, December 29, 1846. He was born near Nashville, Tennessee, in 1801, and attended the West Point Military Academy for a short time. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and began practice in Louisiana. After serving several terms in the state legislature, he was elected to the United States Senate as a Whig. *Biographical Congressional Directory, 1774-1911*, p. 460; *Congressional Globe*, 29 Cong., 2 Sess. (1846-1847), 97-100, *passim*; *Daily Picayune*, January 2-7, 1847.

²⁰ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1833, p. 11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

of the minority. Both reports opposed the action of South Carolina, but the minority report was less severe in its condemnation of that state. Both reports were ordered printed. The matter came before the House on February 25, as the special order of the day. John R. Grymes then offered a substitute report severely denouncing the action of South Carolina, but it was defeated by a vote of thirty-one to eight. B. Z. Canonge then moved the adoption of both reports of the special committee, but his motion was rejected. Thomas W. Chinn then presented a milder set of resolutions as a substitute, which were adopted by a vote of twenty-two to seventeen. John Watkins then moved the adoption of the stronger set of resolutions previously presented by Grymes, but these were rejected by a vote of thirty to eight. In all these parliamentary jockeyings in the House, Isaac Johnson consistently voted in favor of all the reports and resolutions severely denouncing the actions of South Carolina and against the milder proposals.²²

On February 5, 1833, a petition of the President and Board of Directors of the West Feliciana Railroad Company was presented by Johnson to the house of representatives, requesting certain amendments to the charter of that company.²³ This petition was considered at that session, but it was not until March, 1834, of the succeeding session, that the bill based upon the petition became a law.²⁴ On February 13, 1833, Johnson introduced another bill to give to S. Vanwinkle the exclusive privilege of operating a ferry between the Pointe Coupée and West Feliciana shores of the Mississippi.²⁵ One week later he introduced another bill, providing for repeal of the laws giving clerks of court the power to issue injunction orders.²⁶ This marked the end of his activities during his first session, and through his colleague, Alexander Barrow, he asked to be excused for the remainder of the session.²⁷

When the Legislature reconvened in December, 1833, Johnson was again appointed a member of the Judiciary Committee.²⁸ During this session he manifested a keen interest in internal improvements. He was the author of a bill, which passed the

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42, 45, 70-71.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁴ *Louisiana Acts*, 1834, p. 2.

²⁵ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1833, p. 56.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1833-34, p. 5.

Legislature but which did not become a law until several years later, to improve the navigation of the Tangipahoa, Falia, and West Pearl rivers.²⁹ He also showed that he was dissatisfied with the existing judiciary system when he introduced two bills, one to create a criminal court in the parishes of East and West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge,³⁰ and the other to require that district judges, judges of the criminal and city courts of New Orleans, and associate justices be required to reside permanently in their judicial districts and parishes.³¹

After the end of his legislative term Isaac Johnson once more devoted full time to his law practice with Joseph Johnson,³² until 1839, when he was appointed Judge of the Third Judicial District.³³

Upon resumption of his law practice, unhampered by legislative matter, Johnson again began taking an active part in local affairs. He was selected as a member of the executive committee to put into effect certain resolutions drawn up by a meeting of citizens held in St. Francisville in 1835.³⁴ This was a protest meeting, the purpose of which was to counteract the activities of the abolitionists.³⁵ One of the resolutions adopted at this meeting stated:

Slavery in the United States of America is a domestic question, belonging exclusively to the citizens of the slave states, in their individual or sovereign capacity which has been solemnly guaranteed them by all the people of the United States, and Congress has no power or authority to interfere in the emancipation or treatment of slaves in any manner.³⁶

Another of the resolutions stated, in effect, "That the Convention considered the conduct of abolitionists as a direct attack upon the safety of life and property of the slave-holding states."³⁷ In 1835 Johnson again served on a similar committee, which might be called a committee of public safety, the purpose of which committee was to select a patrol of twenty-five men to protect

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³² Advertisement dated March 28, 1834, in *St. Francisville Phoenix*, October 27, 1835.

³³ West Feliciana Parish, Third District Court Records, Book 8, p. 83.

³⁴ *Phoenix*, October 27, 1835.

³⁵ *Ibid.* In 1835 the abolitionists, through their organ, the *Anti-Slavery Record*, were denouncing slavery and attacking the integrity of slaveholders. Henry H. Sims, "A Critical Analysis of Anti-Slavery Literature, 1830-1840," in *Journal of Southern History*, VI (1940), 375.

³⁶ *Phoenix*, October 27, 1835. Resolution 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Resolution 13.

life and property against a band of robbers and vagrants operating in and around West Feliciana Parish.³⁸

Apparently during these years Johnson prospered financially, for he bought thirteen slaves from John McDermott.³⁹ On another occasion he purchased eleven slaves from Samuel Crocker.⁴⁰ Meanwhile he began to acquire other property. In May, 1836, he purchased a tract of land situated in the fork between the Upper Jackson and Woodville roads.⁴¹ This piece of land contained forty-seven acres, for which Johnson paid \$5,000. That property was known as the residence of Isaac Johnson. Today it is owned by F. C. Wilcox, former sheriff of West Feliciana Parish.⁴²

What Johnson did with his slaves cannot be definitely determined. In searching the papers of his Succession Record no evidence as to their disposition was discovered. Twenty-four slaves were too large a number to work a forty-seven-acre farm, so it is assumed that the Negroes were hired out to some of Johnson's friends. This practice was not unusual, for there were instances in those days of people buying slaves to hire out purely as an investment.⁴³ Johnson's residence was a beautiful place, resting approximately one-fourth of a mile off the road that leads from St. Francisville to Jackson. The house is large and spacious, and the yard is large and level, dotted here and there with beautiful and stately magnolias. It is indeed a place of peace and quiet. Small wonder that Johnson, whenever he had the opportunity, came to his home to rest and relax from the cares of state.⁴⁴

CHAPTER III

JUDGE OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT; JUDGE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS IN CRIMINAL CASES; THE GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN, 1839-1846

Judge of the Third District—Judge Johnson in a unique situation—The Judge becomes the defendant—Opinion of Judge Johnson—Decisions appealed—The "West Feliciana Railroad Case"—Appointed Secretary of State—Resigns as Secretary of State—Returns as Judge of Third District—

³⁸ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1835.

³⁹ West Feliciana Parish Bills of Sale, 390. John McDermott was Isaac Johnson's brother-in-law.

⁴⁰ West Feliciana Parish Notarial Records, H, 273.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, F, 107.

⁴² West Feliciana Parish Probate Records, G, 45.

⁴³ Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston, 1929), 181.

⁴⁴ *Daily Delta*, November 6, 1851.

Appointed to Court of Errors and Appeals in Criminal Cases—Democratic barbecue at St. Francisville—The "Boy of Feliciana"—The Democratic Nominating Convention—Results of the Convention—The Whig Convention—A clean campaign—Resigns as Judge—The Constitution of 1845—Johnson's views on the new constitution—Views on the banking problem—Informality of Johnson's campaign—Reaction of the people to Johnson's speeches—The Campaign assumes a new phase—Attempt to discredit Isaac Johnson—Disgust of the Whigs at their own tactics—Election day—Johnson elected.

Prior to 1839 there had been an interchange of judges between the Third and the Eighth judicial districts.¹ This arrangement was changed after 1839, however, under an act of the Legislature of 1838. This new law provided for separate judges to preside in the Third and the Eighth judicial districts. Accordingly when the May, 1839, term of court in West Feliciana came round, Isaac Johnson presided as judge.²

During the early years of his term of office the young Judge encountered many unique situations. In a great many instances civil cases require several years for final settlement. Since Johnson was a successful civil lawyer before he ascended the bench, certain cases in which he had been retained as counsel or in which he had a personal interest were still awaiting final judgment in his court. Had it not been for a law passed at the beginning of the year, these conflicts might have proved quite embarrassing.³ Since John B. Dawson was Parish Judge, the situation was somewhat alleviated. In one case involving the Atchafalaya Railroad and Banking Company, Johnson recused himself because of having been a stockholder and a director of the company.⁴ In addition, it was necessary for the District Judge (Johnson) to step from the bench in sixty-two cases because he had been formerly retained as counsel.⁵ In the December term of court for the same year the Judge was himself the defendant, and in both instances a verdict against him was returned by the Parish Judge Dawson, his brother-in-law.⁶

¹ *Louisiana Acts*, 1838, No. 84, p. 86.

² West Feliciana Parish District Court Records, Book 8 (1838-1840), 83.

³ *Louisiana Acts*, 1839, No. 37, p. 88. This act made it possible for the District Judge to recuse himself in favor of the Parish Judge in cases in which the former was or had been interested.

⁴ West Feliciana Parish District Court Records, Book 10, p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Book 8, pp. 84-475.

⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 1927, judgment for \$200; No. 2197, 422, judgment for \$463. Johnson had endorsed notes for friends and now had to honor the notes.

Despite these minor interruptions Judge Johnson gave a good account of himself. One editor said of him:

Judge Johnson is the most attentive and persevering man we have ever seen, and will go through as much business with a little more dispatch than any other judge in Christendom; his decisions give general satisfaction; an appeal from his Court is rarely taken. A Gentleman, a Scholar, and an upright Judge, may he be long preserved among us in his present capacity.⁷

On some occasions decisions by a district judge were appealed and reversed; of the many cases tried before Judge Johnson during his term of office only a small number of his decisions were reversed.⁸ Of all the cases tried in his court in these years, perhaps the most important was a railroad case, sometimes referred to as the "first big railroad case."⁹ In this, the "West Feliciana Railroad Case," the plaintiff, Isaac McChord, was suing the railroad company for \$500,000 for breach of contract. Judge Johnson dismissed the suit in 1842, but the Louisiana Supreme Court reversed his decision.¹⁰ The case dragged on, and finally a special judge was named to render judgment.¹¹ At length, after many delays, protests, and lengthy arguments on technical points of law, the jury came to a decision on July 31, 1845. The verdict was, "We the jury find a verdict in favor of the plaintiff for the sum of *six and one-fourth cents*."¹² In addition the plaintiff was to pay the costs of the suit, which represented quite a large sum because of the long duration of the litigation.

Recognition of Isaac Johnson's ability as an able and trustworthy man came in 1843. In that year Governor Alexander Mouton appointed him Secretary of State.¹³ His name was placed before the state senate for approval, and on February 14, 1843,

⁷ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, January 13, 1844.

⁸ The decisions reversed were: Collings vs. Hamilton (Book 8, 23); Dunbar vs. Thomas (Book 8, p. 378); Flower vs. O'Connor (Book 10, p. 125); Whittemore & Young vs. Leake & Howell (Book 10, p. 129); Thomas vs. Lester (Book 10, p. 284); Tenny vs. Russell (Book 10, p. 285); McChord vs. West Feliciana Railroad Company (Book 10, p. 290); Lanna vs. Dufour & Co. (Book 10, p. 386); Adams vs. McCauley (Book 10, p. 477); Salisbury vs. Rea (Book 10, p. 620); Johnson vs. Fort & Marshall (Book 10, p. 622). Copies of these decisions are found in West Feliciana Parish District Court Records, Courthouse, St. Francisville, and in Louisiana State Supreme Court Reports, 1839-1845, *passim*.

⁹ West Feliciana Parish District Court Records, Book 10, p. 290. This case, No. 1978, was filed as early as 1840, but the final decision was not rendered until 1845.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 724.

¹² *Ibid.*, *Louisiana Courier*, August 5, 1845, quoting *St. Francisville Chronicle*.

¹³ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, February 11, 1843: *Daily Picayune*, February 14, 1843.

that body approved the nomination.¹⁴ The editor of the *Picayune* paid high tribute to Johnson on this occasion:

The Honorable Isaac Johnson is in the city—his appointment as Secretary of State to go before the Senate, who will of course approve it. . . . The appointment is a popular one. . . . Mr. Johnson unites in his manner the easy elegance of the American gentleman and the open candor of the Republican.¹⁵

Johnson then proceeded to New Orleans to take over his duties as Secretary of State. Upon his arrival in that city he became aware of the fact that to function in his new capacity he must now reside in New Orleans.¹⁶ He promptly resigned his position; he would not remain in New Orleans. His reason for this action was the fact that he did not intend that his family should live in New Orleans, especially during the "sickly season".¹⁷ He did not wish to expose his wife and children to the malignance of the climatic conditions in the city.

Forthwith Johnson returned to West Feliciana, and for a short period he was neither Judge nor Secretary of State.¹⁸ Since the Governor had persuaded him to accept the appointment as Secretary of State, there was not much doubt that he would re-appoint Johnson to the judgeship he had resigned to accept the new office.¹⁹

"Against Judge Johnson's return to the Bench of the Third District, we are sure no one here will complain. His presence among his old friends and associates will be hailed with universal satisfaction."²⁰ These were the words of the editor of the *Baton Rouge Gazette* in welcoming back the popular Judge of the Third Judicial District.

Apparently Governor Mouton would not take "no" for an answer, for he soon had another appointment for Isaac Johnson. This office must have been more to Johnson's liking, for he accepted. In 1842 the Legislature had passed an act creating the Court of Errors and Appeals in Criminal Cases, to meet semi-annually in New Orleans.²¹ The Court was to consist of three

¹⁴ *Daily Picayune*, February 14, 1843.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Letter from H. to the Editor, dated March 1, 1843, published in *Baton Rouge Gazette*, March 4, 1843.

¹⁷ Edwin A. Davis in his edition of the "Diary of Bennet H. Barrow," page 4, states that yellow fever was not as prevalent in the hills of West Feliciana as in other sections of the state.

¹⁸ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, March 4, 1843.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, April 15, 1845; *Louisiana Acts*, 1843, No. 93, p. 59.

judges, to be selected from the judicial districts. The three selected were Thomas C. Nicholls,²² Isaac Johnson, and George R. King.²³ The Court met for the first time on July 5, 1843. Johnson was now very much occupied, as his judicial duties kept him busy during practically the entire year.

A man of Johnson's retiring nature would have been content to remain as he was for the remainder of his life, but his friends would not have it so. In October, 1843, a Democratic barbecue was held in St. Francisville for the purpose of selecting a candidate for governor to be nominated at the State Democratic Convention to be held in 1845.²⁴ Among the toasts offered on this occasion was one by General A. G. Howell: "The Governor of Louisiana, a good Democrat as ever fluttered."²⁵ During the course of the barbecue General Howell proposed another toast: "The 'Boy of West Feliciana'²⁶ who never traveled farther north than Natchez and farther south than New Orleans, may be the next Governor of Louisiana."²⁷ In reply to this suggestion the editor of the *Baton Rouge Gazette* had this to say:

Now the "Boy of Feliciana" is as clever as anybody's "boy", and is withal a gentleman of high character and handsome abilities; but the fact of his never having traveled farther north than Natchez or south than New Orleans, strikes us as being queer qualifications for the Office of Governor. General Johnson, however, has the qualifications which fit him for the office to which his friends desire to elevate him; and if we must have a "locofoco"²⁸ Governor of Louisiana, we say give us the "Boy of Feliciana" by all means. He is a worthy foe, and altogether, we are sorry to see so clever a gentleman in the opposition ranks. We should be proud of him as a Whig . . .²⁹

²² Thomas C. Nicholls studied law in the office of his brother-in-law, Nathan Morse, and was admitted to the bar at the age of eighteen. He first opened an office in Opelousas, but later removed to New Orleans. He fought in the war of 1812, and then settled in Donaldsonville in 1815. The new court lasted only from 1843 to 1846, when its duties were taken over by the Supreme Court. Governor Isaac Johnson wished to appoint Nicholls to the Supreme Court bench, but he declined because of ill health. His youngest son, Francis T. Nicholls, served as Governor of Louisiana, 1876-1880 and 1888-1892, after which he became Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court. "The Nicholls Family in Louisiana," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, VI (1923), 5-18.

²³ *Daily Picayune*, July 6, 1843. George Rogers King was born in St. Landry Parish, Louisiana in 1807. After graduating from the University of Virginia he served successively as member of the legislature, district attorney, district judge, judge of the court of appeals, and Associate Justice of the State Supreme Court from March 19, 1846 to March 1, 1850. He died in St. Landry Parish, March 21, 1871. "The Celebration of the Centenary of the Supreme Court of Louisiana," in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, IV (1921), 117.

²⁴ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, October 28, 1843.

²⁵ This toast was obviously intended for Governor Alexander Mouton.

²⁶ Johnson was not yet forty years of age. This toast was intended for Judge Johnson.

²⁷ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, October 28, 1843.

²⁸ This is the name the Whigs applied to the Democrats.

²⁹ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, October 28, 1843.

Approximately one year later another Democratic barbecue was held in St. Francisville.³⁰ Though no contemporary report of this affair is available, the gathering probably solidified the support of the eastern part of Louisiana for Johnson's candidacy. Meanwhile the Democrats of the western part of the state were uniting behind their candidate, General Joseph Marshall Walker of Rapides.³¹ It is evident that the delegates from the northern and western sections of the state were instructed to vote for Walker's nomination.³² Thus when the Democratic State Convention met in Baton Rouge on the second Monday in July, the delegates were ready to vote for the nomination of either Johnson or Walker, in accordance with instructions received prior to their departure from their respective parishes.

The Convention was to be held on Monday, and on Sunday delegates began arriving from the lower parishes and from the western part of the state.³³ The feeling among the early arrivals was evidently for General Walker, but with the arrival of the delegations on board the steamboat *Brilliant* and those from the Felicianas on Monday, support appeared evenly divided.³⁴ However, up to the time of the Convention the friends of General Walker appeared very confident of success.³⁵

The delegates convened, and with the roll call the Convention was organized by the appointment of Thomas W. Scott of East Feliciana as president.³⁶ The proceedings are well described by the editor of the *Baton Rouge Gazette*, thus:

The question being now on the basis of procedure, it created one of the most tedious and animated discussions we have ever witnessed in any deliberative assembly, for more than two hours. At last the question was settled and the votes were taken "viva voce" by parishes, each parish casting one vote for every one hundred votes given at the last presidential election. On counting the votes it was found that the Honorable Isaac Johnson of West Feliciana had 71 votes for Governor and General Joseph Walker of Rapides, 61. . . . Six parishes were not represented.³⁷ In our opinion had the

³⁰ Entry in the "Diary of Bennet H. Barrow" for November 1, 1844.

³¹ *Louisiana Courier*, June 13, 15, July 16, 1845.

³² *Ibid.*, June 17, 1845, quoting the *Natchitoches Chronicle*.

³³ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, July 19, 1845.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*; *Louisiana Courier*, July 15, 1845.

³⁶ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, July 19, 1845.

³⁷ *Louisiana Courier*, July 16, 1845. The parishes were: St. Mary, DeSoto, Bossier, Lafourche Interior, Vermillion, and Jackson. Joseph Marshall Walker was born in New Orleans in 1780. He had been president of the Constitutional Convention of 1844-45, and was elected state treasurer by the General Assembly in 1846. He was elected governor in 1850. Further details of his life may be found in James William Sanders, "The Political Career of Joseph M. Walker, Governor of Louisiana, 1850-1853" (M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1939.).

Red River parishes been as well represented as those bordering on the Mississippi General Walker would have earned the nomination. Trasimond Landry of St. James received 71 votes for Lieutenant-Governor and General J. B. Plauché of New Orleans, 60.³⁸

A week later the Whigs held their State Convention in Baton Rouge and nominated General William DeBuys and Honorable Edward Sparrow.³⁹ Of this nomination one editor wrote, "No candidate who the Whigs can bring forward will approach within a thousand votes of Johnson."⁴⁰

Of the approaching campaign the editor of the *Picayune* wrote:

. . . Judging from the signs of the times, the approaching canvass will be the most creditably conducted of any one that has taken place in this state, or in any other in the Union for several years. . . . The writings of the party newspapers show either absence of everything like vulgar personality and individual scurrility and vindictiveness, which on previous similar occasions, both here and elsewhere have been too liberally indulged in. . . .⁴¹

Apparently Johnson could not do justice to his candidacy by retaining his seat on the judicial bench, so he resigned in October,⁴² and shortly afterwards William D. Boyle⁴³ was appointed to succeed him.⁴⁴ From this date until January, 1846, Johnson could devote all his time to the campaign.

In addition to the race for the governorship of Louisiana, the people were also interested in another important matter. This was the ratification of the new State Constitution.⁴⁵ In the election of November 3, 1845, this document was ratified by a great majority.⁴⁶

³⁸ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, July 19, 1845; *Louisiana Courier*, July 16, 1845; *Daily Picayune*, July 16, 1845. John B. Plauché was an old Louisiana Creole who had served in the Legislature, was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1844-45, served in the Mexican War, and was finally elected lieutenant-governor in 1850.

³⁹ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, July 26, 1845. William DeBuys, long prominent in public life, was a native of New Orleans. He served in the lower house of the Legislature and had been elected speaker of that body. He had also served as postmaster at New Orleans, and as state treasurer. *Ibid.*, July 5, 1845; Leslie M. Norton, "The History of the Whig Party in Louisiana" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1940), 260-263. Edward Sparrow was a native of Concordia Parish. He served in the state senate, and was a member of the Confederate Congress, 1861-1865.

⁴⁰ *Louisiana Courier*, July 16, 1845.

⁴¹ *Daily Picayune*, August 14, 1845.

⁴² *Daily Delta*, October 17, 1845. On this date Isaac Johnson resigned as judge.

⁴³ Boyle had been District Attorney of the Third District when Johnson occupied the bench.

⁴⁴ *Daily Picayune*, October 30, 1845.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, November 1, December 2, 1845. The Constitutional Convention had convened in Jackson on August 5, 1844. After a session of three weeks there, it adjourned to reconvene in New Orleans on January 14, 1845. The new Constitution was ratified by the people in the election of November, 1845.

⁴⁶ *Daily Picayune*, December 2, 1845. With Caddo Parish not yet heard from, only 1,395 votes had been cast against the new Constitution, while 12,277 had been cast for it, insuring its adoption by a majority of 10,882 votes.

Meanwhile the Democrats were gaining strength all over the state, and Johnson and Landry carried their cause to as many parishes as possible.⁴⁷ Everywhere they went they were well received. When the two candidates arrived in Natchitoches, the editor of the *Chronicle* wrote: "In the Honorable Isac Johnson, we present a gentleman of amiable manners, who in private life, needs only to be known to be esteemed; a gentleman of fine talents and strict fidelity in the discharge of all his public duties."⁴⁸ Though Johnson preferred the more tranquil phases of political life, he, nevertheless, entered into the campaign vigorously and thoroughly.⁴⁹

Concerning the new Constitution Johnson had a definite opinion. He pointed out that it was deficient in some of the essentials of democracy, and wanting in a full and complete display of the principles of American liberty and public right. "Still," he said, "it contains the germs of progress— every objection will be obviated as time and experience shall convince the people that further reforms are necessary."⁵⁰

In an impromptu address given in the Third Municipality in New Orleans Johnson gave vent to his feelings about the finances of the country.⁵¹ He described the great triumph of democracy since the downfall of the United States Bank and the subjection of the state banks to the control of the laws. "When concentrated and incorporated wealth is in the ascendant, the people are under the weather and crushed beneath the weight of monopolies," said the Democratic candidate. "Furthermore," said Johnson, "monopoly and democracy are the antipodes of one another; they cannot exist together—they are essentially unlike in their origin and effects; the first breathes of the Mammon of unrighteousness; the latter partakes of the benign spirit of Christianity." Commenting on this speech, one New Orleans editor said: "It was plain the Judge spoke from the heart, and in his uttering of the language of true feeling, he found a response in the bosom of every man present."⁵²

The next day Johnson made one of his regular campaign speeches in New Orleans. The very informality of his meetings

⁴⁷ *Louisiana Courier*, August 5, 1845.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, August 6, 1845.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, August 8, 1845.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

appealed to the people who heard him. At this particular meeting there was no chairman or secretary, and Judge Johnson came into the room like any other ordinary citizen, undistinguished from the rest except for the deference paid to him by all present.⁵³ Again the "Boy of West Feliciana" delivered a forceful address, saying:

It is Democracy that secures political freedom and social happiness. Look at the other countries where aristocracy and monopoly are in the ascendent—the people of England, Ireland, France, enjoy certain political rights—but their social condition is not as happy as ours, because the lawmakers being chosen by the richer classes, legislate only for the benefit of those classes. The Democracy in this country has achieved great things for the public freedom and happiness—they have abolished the Old Bank of the United States and put a rein upon the local banks of our own State—they have lately annexed Texas to the Union, in spite of all opposition. It is now rumored that we are going to have war with Mexico. Well! fellow citizens, this war may lead to some other.⁵⁴

So went the speeches of Johnson all over the State of Louisiana. Soon the people began to look forward to his addresses, and everywhere his reception was such as his warmest friends might wish for him.⁵⁵ The campaign wore on, and in December Johnson appeared in Alexandria.⁵⁶ Here General Walker showed that he was a true Democrat. Without thought of the State Convention struggle, Walker led the speakers in urging the people to vote for the choice of the Democrats.⁵⁷

With Christmas approaching, Johnson made his way back to New Orleans.⁵⁸ Here the hitherto friendly canvass assumed a new phase. Early in January some of the Whigs circulated ballots titled, "Isaac Jackson for Governor."⁵⁹ In addition they accused Johnson of being unfriendly to the Irish,⁶⁰ charging that he had incriminated himself in a eulogy pronounced upon the death of Washington Whittaker, a young man in West Feliciana Parish.⁶¹

Johnson denied the charge in a letter published in a New Orleans paper.⁶² In this communication he explained the whole

⁵³ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1845.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, August 15, 1845, quoting *Natchitoches Chronicle*.

⁵⁶ *Louisiana Courier*, December 17, 1845.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, December 19, 22, 23, 1845.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, January 14, 1846.

⁶⁰ Both parties were competing for the large Irish vote in New Orleans.

⁶¹ *Louisiana Courier*, January 19, 1846.

⁶² Letter from Isaac Johnson to William H. Wilder, Secretary of the State Democratic Central Committee, dated January 17, 1846, and published in the *Courier*, January 19, 1846.

unfortunate incident. It seems that Washington Whittaker had been tried and found guilty of the charge of murder. While in jail, he committed suicide. Since the young man had been a member of the militia, Johnson and General John B. Dawson had been asked to the funeral in their capacities as militia officers. Johnson failed to appear in uniform, and one of the members of the family, Colonel Whittaker, never forgave him for this oversight. On one occasion the Colonel accused him of being unfriendly to the Irish and became very insulting at a formal gathering. Johnson had endured as much of these unjust accusations as he could and had challenged the man on the spot, but the Colonel refused to fight.⁶³ In addition the dead boy's brother issued a statement asking the people not to believe what was printed in the handbills.⁶⁴

Some of the Whigs were so disgusted with the charges that notices appeared in the newspapers, disavowing responsibility for such charges, saying: "We are opposed to Isaac Johnson as opponents, in political principles, but we respect in him the honest and upright citizen."⁶⁵ The *Courier* was quite vehement in its denunciation of the charges of the opposing party, and expressed itself in no uncertain terms: "Finding the Democratic Candidate for Governor invulnerable and intangible in his public and private character, some people have conjured up against him a curious kind of charge that has no existence anywhere but in their diseased imaginations."⁶⁶

To say election day, Monday, January 19, 1846, dawned bright and clear would be a gross exaggeration, for early on the morning of that day a storm began to rage. The election went off quietly and without any violence.⁶⁷ A few days later it was evident that Johnson had carried New Orleans by a majority of 345 votes and Baton Rouge by a majority of 207.⁶⁸ It soon became clear that Johnson was to be the next governor.⁶⁹ One editor blamed the weather for the outcome of the contest when he wrote: "The Democrats would throng the polls, if it rained spikes and pitchforks. The Whigs love not the inclemencies of the skies."⁷⁰

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Statement of Richard Murphy, in *Louisiana Courier*, January 19, 1846.

⁶⁵ *New Orleans Bee*, January 19, 1846; *Louisiana Courier*, January 19, 1846.

⁶⁶ *Louisiana Courier*, January 16, 1846.

⁶⁷ *Daily Picayune*, January 22, 1846.

⁶⁸ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, January 24, 1846.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, January 31, 1846.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Meanwhile, early in February, the Governor-elect returned to New Orleans from St. Francisville whence he had gone to vote and to rest from the strain of the campaign. He arrived in the city and reserved a room at the St. Charles Hotel. Not long after his arrival became known, his supporters in the Crescent City congregated at the hotel to serenade the new chief magistrate. To this group of admirers he made a few remarks:

Fellow citizens, I thank you for the renewed mark of your respect and confidence. By the voice of the people in Louisiana, and with your assistance, I have been elected to the high and responsible office, which if the Divine Being spares my life, I shall in a few days be called to fill. In the performance of my duties as chief magistrate, I shall endeavor to, with justice to all, to always study the best interests of Louisiana.⁷¹

When the results of the election were tabulated by the Legislature, it was found that Johnson had been elected by a majority of 1,893 votes.⁷² The "Boy of Feliciana" had justified the faith of his friends; for the next four years he would belong to the people of Louisiana.

CHAPTER IV

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA, 1846-1850

Inaugural — Johnson's attitude toward state rights and the tariff — Johnson, a "strict-constructionist" — Free schools — Admonition to office seekers — Harmony between incoming and outgoing administrations — Controversy over the oaths — Judiciary Committee report — Removal of the Capital — "Country vs. City" — Outbreak of hostilities with Mexico — Taylor asks for reinforcements — Governor Johnson complies — The war, a popular one in the Capital — New Orleans becomes the clearing-house for troops — Return of Louisiana Volunteers — Difficult first years — Weather and crops in 1846 — Neglect of schools by the Legislature — State Superintendent of Education.

The inauguration of Governor Isaac Johnson and Lieutenant-Governor Trasimond Landry took place on February 12, 1846, in the First Congregational Church¹ of Reverend Theodore Clapp in New Orleans.² In his address to the crowd Johnson returned thanks for the high honor bestowed upon him. Inviting attention

⁷¹ *Louisiana Courier*, February 10, 1846.

⁷² *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, p. 8.

¹ This church was destroyed by the same great fire which consumed the first St. Charles Hotel. *New Orleans Weekly Delta*, January 19, 1851.

² *Baton Rouge Gazette*, February 14, 1846, quoting the *Daily Picayune* and the *Louisiana Courier* of February 12, 1846.

to an outline of the opinions and principles which would govern his administration, he stated that he approached the duties of his office with hesitancy and distrust.³ The magnitude and interest of the trusts imposed upon him were heightened by the circumstances of his taking over the governorship at a moment when a new organization was to be made in all the departments of the state government.⁴

Continuing his inaugural address, he made the following statements:

The political church in which it was my lot to be cast originally, and where I have since continued and still delight to dwell has taught me the true theory of our institutions: That the Federal and State Governments should be confined by a strict construction to their Constitutions, each within its limited and legitimate sphere: That all powers not expressly granted to the Federal government or which are not necessary, as an incident, to the execution of expressly delegated powers are reserved and belong to the states and to the people: That sovereignty as applied to government is neither in the Federal nor State governments exclusively, but in both, by powers as well defined as the imposing laconism of a constitutional language will admit: In matters of domestic policy and in all other matters not delegated, the states are supreme and wisely saved from any interference with foreign diplomacy as incompatible with their relations to the Federal Government and to each other.⁵

With this declaration of strict construction and state rights, Johnson continued his inaugural. In his opinion internal improvements, the national bank, distribution of the proceeds of the sale of public lands,⁶ the bankruptcy bill, and the assumption of state debts by the federal government had ceased to be political issues.⁷ He further denounced the protective tariff as discriminatory legislation and expressed himself in favor of tariff for revenue only.⁸

He concluded his address in the following manner:

Let me then cherish a sanguine hope that, in our own favored land, the jealous spirit of civil liberty will watch with sleepless vigilance every act of legislation and save us from the appalling consequences of partial and unequal laws.

³ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, p. 11.

⁴ *Daily Picayune*, February 13, 1846.

⁵ Inaugural Address, in *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, p. 11.

⁶ Among the States in proportion to their representation in Congress.

⁷ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, p. 11.

⁸ *Ibid.*

If in this free country error of opinion must exist to distract temporarily the councils of the nation and delude the people, when reason is left free to combat it, truth is mighty and will prevail.⁹

On the same day Governor Johnson delivered his first address to the Legislature.¹⁰ He congratulated the members upon the addition of Texas to the Union.¹¹ He reminded them of the difficult task of putting into effect the machinery of government under the new Constitution.¹² He dwelt at some length upon the changes in the judiciary, in which the district was to be substituted for the parish system.¹³ A principal part of his discourse was given over to the subject of free schools. His remarks upon this matter were both eloquent and instructive, and in his delivery he was frequently interrupted by the applause of the legislators.¹⁴ Special attention was given to the clause in the new Constitution, prohibiting the Legislature from assuming large obligations for an incoming group of lawmakers to settle.¹⁵

The new Democratic chief magistrate saved a pertinent part of his address for the conclusion:

... I came to power untrammelled by pledges and promises except those which bind me to fidelity in the administration of the affairs of State. In making appointments to office, I trust I shall be enabled to acquit myself so as not entirely to disappoint the expectations of those who so cordially supported me. This is a delicate part of the Executive function. At all events unsullied integrity, adequate qualification, both mental and physical, and moral power shall be indispensable requisites in every instance. . . .¹⁶

Concerning the inauguration one New Orleans editor wrote quite a complimentary account. He commented upon the harmony and absence of ill feeling between the incoming and outgoing administrations.¹⁷ The writer continued: "It would seem as if personal appearance was not without its political influence in Louisiana. Two of the best looking men in the state perhaps are Governor Johnson and Ex-Governor Mouton."¹⁸

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12; *Louisiana Courier*, February 13, 1846.

¹⁰ *Louisiana Courier*, February 13, 1846.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Southerners were particularly gratified that Texas had entered the Union as a slave State, thereby adding to the Southern representation in Congress.

¹² Address to the Legislature, in *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, p. 12.

¹³ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, February 21, 1846.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, *Daily Delta*, January 23, 28, 1846. Johnson had been besieged by office seekers.

¹⁷ *Daily Delta*, February 13, 1846.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Scarcely two weeks of the new Governor's term had elapsed when an unpleasant happening threatened to disrupt the whole system of state government. The Constitution of 1845 provided that elected officials should take another oath in addition to the one provided by the United States Constitution.¹⁹ On the advice of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, Johnson had added the latter to the oath prescribed by state constitution.²⁰ When the Attorney-General, who had been appointed by Johnson, appeared in the New Orleans courts to be recognized, a lawyer named Wolfe objected. This man maintained that Johnson had not taken the proper oath; hence he, Johnson, was not legally Governor and his appointments were invalid.²¹

The gravity of the situation and the seriousness of the allegations were illustrated by the editor of the *Daily Delta*. This gentleman pointed out:

If these charges are true, all acts of the Governor and the Legislature are void; and Louisiana is in a state of anarchy. We have no government; hence, we are not a state and do not belong to the United States. Even the abolitionists would be content to keep Texas in if they could keep Louisiana out. What a brilliant example we would be to the future advocates of "peaceable secession."²²

This question was taken up in the house of representatives and referred to the judiciary committee. That body then recessed while the committee went into action. Sometime that same day the members again assembled to hear the report. The judiciary committee reported in effect that "it could find no point of contention since the articles in question of both Constitutions had been followed out."²³ Apparently satisfied, the house again resumed deliberations, but Mr. Wolfe carried his case to the city court. Here the judge of the court²⁴ called in Judge Francois Xavier Martin of the Supreme Court. Justice Martin ruled that the oaths were valid and advised Wolfe to withdraw his plea.²⁵ Wolfe then carried his case to the United States District Court. Here it was ruled that the decision of the New Orleans Court was not against the Constitution of the United States; hence, there was no cause of action.²⁶

¹⁹ *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the State of Louisiana, Begun and Held in the City of New Orleans, on the 14th Day of January, 1845* (New Orleans, 1845), 45.

²⁰ *Daily Delta*, February 24, 1846; *Louisiana Courier*, February 24, 1846.

²¹ *Daily Delta*, February 24, 1846.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846, pp. 34-35.

²⁴ Judge Canonge of the Criminal Court of New Orleans.

²⁵ Proceedings of the Criminal Court, in *Daily Delta*, February 24, 1846.

²⁶ *Daily Delta*, March 13, 1846.

No sooner had the debate and discomfort over the alleged conflict between the constitution of the state and that of the United States ended when another important debate materialized in the Legislature. This was the removal of the state capital from New Orleans to some other city in the state.²⁷ The matter resolved itself into a "country vs. city" affair. Four locations were proposed.²⁸ When the bill was passed, it provided that the new site would be Baton Rouge.²⁹ Governor Johnson signed the bill immediately; in fact it was the third act to bear his signature.³⁰

Meanwhile the relations between the United States and Mexico were becoming more and more strained. On April 10, 1846, a scouting party sent out by General Zachary Taylor was fired upon by the Mexicans, and several men were killed.³¹ General Taylor found himself in a very serious situation and wrote Governor Johnson asking for reinforcements.³² Here the Governor's previous military training stood him in good stead, for on May 2nd he sent a bill to the House, asking for an appropriation to muster and equip four regiments of volunteers.³³

The House passed this bill immediately and adopted resolutions requesting the Governor to keep that body informed as to what he needed to cope with the serious situation.³⁴ The members of the lower house asked the Governor to offer a bounty of twenty-five dollars to each volunteer.³⁵ The volunteers were not coming in fast enough to suit the Governor, so he issued a proclamation calling out the state militia.³⁶

The war was popular in the state capitol, and several members of the Legislature resigned to volunteer for service in Mexico.³⁷ By this time the government of the United States had declared war on Mexico, and companies of volunteers were arriving in New Orleans daily to be transported by boat to Texas.³⁸ However, the quick action of the Governor of Louisiana had re-

²⁷ Louisiana *House Journal*, 1846, p. 35; *Constitution of 1845*, Article 112.

²⁸ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, February 21, 1846. Mr. Kenner of Ascension proposed Donaldsonville; Dr. Scott of East Baton Rouge proposed Baton Rouge; Mr. Taylor of Natchitoches proposed Natchitoches; and Mr. Hunter of West Feliciana proposed St. Francisville.

²⁹ Louisiana *House Journal*, 1846, p. 35.

³⁰ Louisiana *Acts*, 1846, No. 3, p. 4.

³¹ *Daily Delta*, April 12, 1846.

³² Letter from General Taylor to Governor Johnson, dated April 26, 1846, published in *Daily Delta*, May 3, 1846.

³³ Louisiana *House Journal*, 1846, p. 135.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Proclamation of the Governor, in *Daily Delta*, May 5, 1846.

³⁷ *Daily Delta*, May 5, 1846.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, May 14, 1846. Congress declared war on Mexico on May 12, 1846.

lieved the pressure on the position of General Taylor, and the war was now proceeding more in favor of the General. The Governor pointed out this fact to the Legislature in 1847 when he said: "The State is remote from the seat of the Federal Government; yet it was able to do in time of War what the Federal Government could not do."³⁹

Not long after the outbreak of war Louisiana volunteers began to return to the state.⁴⁰ They reported that they had severed relations with the army, because they had as yet taken no part in actual combat. In another instance a group arrived in New Orleans, saying that when the time came for them to receive their pay, some of them found that they owed more than they had coming to them.⁴¹ When the Governor heard this, he immediately wrote the Secretary of War and appointed a committee to investigate the claims of the men.⁴² Shortly he received a letter from the Paymaster-General stating that the men had received all that was lawfully due them.⁴³ This reply was not at all satisfactory, since many of the men did not have money enough to get home.⁴⁴ Then through the efforts of the Governor, the state officials, and the Mayor of New Orleans a campaign was initiated to obtain money to bring the volunteers home.⁴⁵ Taking note of this action the United States Quartermaster offered to each volunteer who would apply the funds necessary to get him home. By November all the claims had been paid, and the men had come home, thus relieving the state and the city of the responsibility of caring for them during a long period of idleness and inactivity.⁴⁶

The first year of Johnson's administration was a trying one for the West Felicianian. The Legislature was made up largely of young men.⁴⁷ So radical and so numerous were the changes in the new Constitution, that the work of putting it into effect might have taxed the patience and abilities of experienced statesmen and veteran legislators.⁴⁸ The editor of the *Picayune* wrote: "We venture to say that if fault be found with the laws passed

³⁹ Address to the Legislature, in *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846-47, p. 4.

⁴⁰ *Daily Delta*, August 2, 1846.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, August 23, 27, 1846.

⁴³ Letter from Paymaster-General to Governor Johnson: dated August 19, 1846, published in *Daily Delta*, August 30, 1846.

⁴⁴ *Daily Delta*, September 5, 1846.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, September 6, 1846.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, November 1, 1846.

⁴⁷ *Daily Picayune*, May 8, 1847.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

by the legislature, upon investigation it will be found that they are as perfect as the Constitution under which they are formed."⁴⁹

In addition, the weather conditions in that year completely ruined the cotton crop. The ravages of nature were further aggravated by the destruction carried on by caterpillars.⁵⁰ In some parts of the state the yield was as low as one-fourth that of the preceding year.⁵¹ Furthermore, the members of the Legislature had neglected Governor Johnson's proposal for a system of free public schools.⁵² Despite this oversight the Chief Executive had appointed a State Superintendent of Public Education.⁵³ The work of this office had formerly been included among the duties of the Secretary of State.⁵⁴ Although a State Superintendent of Education had been appointed, his duties were vague and the sources of revenue for the schools uncertain.

CHAPTER V

GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA, 1846-1850 (CONT'D)

General Assembly of 1847 — Desire to annex all of Mexico — Request for aid to schools — Death of Senator Alexander Barrow — The State University at New Orleans — Opposition to the public schools — Sources of revenue for schools — Rural opposition — Day of prayer and thanksgiving, December 9, 1847 — Death of Charlotte Johnson — Legislature in session, 1848 — Biennial sessions of the future — Cash balance in the treasury — Denunciation of the "Wilmot Proviso" — Louisiana willing to abide by the terms of the Missouri Compromise — Prophecy of impending action — Important legislation — Condition of the school system — Special session of the Legislature — High water of 1849 — Interest in foreign affairs — Capitol at Baton Rouge nearing completion — Moving the government to Baton Rouge — Arrival in Baton Rouge — Johnson not a "party" man — Personal popularity — Last message to the Legislature — Ex-Governor Isaac Johnson.

When the General Assembly met in special session in New Orleans in 1847 to continue the work it had not completed in the regular session of 1846, Governor Johnson again addressed that body in one of his eloquent speeches. He informed the Legislature

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, August 15, September 12, 1846; *Daily Picayune*, September 15, October 3, 1846, quoting *Natchez Courier*, *Alexandria Red River Republican*, and *St. Francisville Chronicle*.

⁵¹ *Daily Picayune*, September 15, 1846.

⁵² *Louisiana House Journal*, 1847, p. 48.

⁵³ *Daily Picayune*, May 5, 1846, announcing the appointment of Professor Alexander Dimitry.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

that, even though none of the volunteers from Louisiana had yet engaged in actual fighting, the Mexican War was proceeding quite satisfactorily.¹ He expressed the wish that the entire territory of Mexico might be annexed by the United States. His criticism of the Federal Government for not sharing in the expense for the equipment for the militia was strong and emphatic. The Legislature was asked to draw up a resolution asking Congress to share in the increased expense of operating the Charity Hospital in New Orleans.²

In this address the Governor again requested legislation on the public school system. Gratification was expressed that the state penitentiary was now an asset, since the leasing of this institution now provided revenue. In the same vein, it was pointed out that a state insane asylum was necessary.³ Tribute was paid to Alexander Barrow, who had died while serving in the United States Senate, and with whom Johnson had formerly served in the lower house of the General Assembly. Alexander Barrow was born near Nashville, Tennessee, in 1801. As a young man he attended the United States Military Academy at West Point. After he left the Academy he studied law and began to practice near Nashville. He later moved to Louisiana and became a planter. He was elected a representative from West Feliciana Parish along with Isaac Johnson. In 1841 he was chosen a United States Senator from Louisiana, which post he held until his death at Baltimore on December 29, 1846.⁴

Having heard the recommendations of the Governor, the Legislature proceeded to work out the desired legislation. One of the first bills to become law was an act for organizing the University of Louisiana in New Orleans, which had been provided for in the Constitution of 1845.⁵ Following this the debate began on the Public School bill.⁶ The contentions of the opposition to the bill were long and eloquent. The opponents based their argument on the following points:

- (1) No revenue law had been passed for the support of the school system;

¹ Message to the Legislature, in *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846-47, p. 4.

² This increase was due to the fact that so many men wounded in the war were admitted to the Hospital.

³ *Louisiana House Journal* 1847, p. 8. Information on the penitentiary may be found in Leon Stout, "Origin and Early History of the Louisiana Penitentiary" (M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1934).

⁴ Alcée Fortier, editor, *Louisiana, Comprising Sketches of Parishes, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form* (3 vols., Atlanta, 1914), I, 70.

⁵ *Louisiana Acts*, 1847, No. 49, p. 39.

⁶ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1847, p. 43.

- (2) There were no specified duties for the State Superintendent;
- (3) The creation of the office of Parish Superintendent was useless and expensive;
- (4) That the system was only an experiment and should not be tried on a large scale;
- (5) That the schools should be supported by annual taxation, not from the permanent fund;
- (6) No other state in the Union had a successful free school system depending upon taxation.⁷

The proponents of the bill overcame all adverse arguments and enacted it into law.⁸ Now Superintendent Alexander Dimitry would have a school system to operate.

The system of public education which was to go into effect would be financed from:

- (1) Ten percent of the proceeds from the sales of Public Lands, under the Act of Congress of 1841;⁹
- (2) Estates of deceased persons, to which the State had become entitled by law;
- (3) Fines and forfeitures not otherwise appropriated;
- (4) Proceeds of all lands hereafter granted to the State by the United States for school purposes, and all other lands not granted for a specific purpose;
- (5) Donations for the support of the public schools;
- (6) Such other means as the Legislature might from time to time set apart.¹⁰

The country folk in Louisiana did not take kindly to the new system of education.¹¹ They were unwilling to be taxed for the support of free schools because of their general antipathy to new taxes of any description.¹² Furthermore, the sparseness of the population in some sections made it impossible for a large percentage of the people to receive any benefit from the new system.¹³

Meanwhile the Legislature was informed by the Governor that it would be necessary to ask the United States Secretary of War to refund the money spent by the State in equipping a regi-

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Louisiana Acts*, 1847, No. 64, p. 52.

⁹ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, March 7, 1840.

¹⁰ *The First Report of the Superintendent of Public Education* (New Orleans, 1847), 1-3.

¹¹ *Franklin, Louisiana, Planters' Banner and Louisiana Agriculturist*, August 17, 1848.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

ment of infantry called for by President James K. Polk in November, 1846.¹⁴ The expenses of this regiment had been paid from money raised by popular subscription. So that the individual subscribers would not suffer from their generosity, the State had repaid to each one the sum he had contributed to the fund.¹⁵

In November, 1847, to show the gratification in his heart for the blessings which had come to the people and the state, Governor Johnson issued a proclamation setting aside December 9, 1847, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. The proclamation read:

To humbly thank the Supreme Being for his forbearance and goodness to us; and especially for his goodness to our fathers in nerving their arms for the unequal contest for freedom, and in endowing them with wisdom to devise the beautiful system of state sovereignties, which, by the Compact of Union is bound for certain purposes into one harmonious and independent and inseparable power. May the blessings of religious and civil liberty be continued to us and our posterity. . . .¹⁶

Hardly had the day of thanksgiving and prayer passed when a great tragedy befell the Governor. His wife, Charlotte, died at their home in New Orleans.¹⁷ The body, accompanied by the grief-stricken husband, was taken aboard the steamboat *Eliska* and transported to St. Francisville.¹⁸ Here in historic Grace Church the funeral was held, then the body was taken to the family cemetery at "Troy" for burial.¹⁹ The death of his beloved wife left the rearing of the three children to Isaac Johnson. Walter, the youngest, was but six years of age.

After the death of his wife, Governor Johnson returned to New Orleans to be present at the opening of the Legislative session in January, 1848. Here, in another of his lengthy and eloquent messages for which he had become known, he outlined the labors of the lawmakers.²⁰ He noted that under the provisions of the Constitution regular sessions of the Legislature were to be held biennially and limited to sixty days. His preference was for annual and limited sessions; but since this was impossible, the biennial sessions should be unlimited.²¹ He asked that provision be made for the purchase of slaves and equipment by the state

¹⁴ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1846-47, p. 146.

¹⁵ Charles Gayarré, *A History of Louisiana* (4 vols., New Orleans, 1903), IV, 671.

¹⁶ *Baton Rouge Democratic Advocate*, November 24, 1847.

¹⁷ *Weekly Delta*, December 14, 1847.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Grace Church Records, A, Entry of December 17, 1847. Charlotte Johnson was thirty-nine years of age when she died.

²⁰ *Daily Picayune*, January 19, 1848.

²¹ *Louisiana House Journal*, 1848, p. 7.

for use in making internal improvements. A request was voiced that laws be devised so as to embrace but one object.²² It was pointed out to the General Assembly that the University of Louisiana was operating and that progress had been made in the institution in the fields of Medicine, Law, and Science.²³ In conclusion he announced a cash balance of \$294,328.21 in the Treasury.²⁴

At this time it was clearly seen that the Mexican War would result in the annexation of new territory.²⁵ Consequently David Wilmot, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, introduced a measure known as the "Wilmot Proviso", which would prevent the extension of slavery into the new territory.²⁶ The Governor regarded this intended legislation as "utterly repugnant to the letter and spirit of the Federal Constitution."²⁷

Continuing his discourse on the slavery question, the Governor gave the opinion that Congress had no power or authority to rule on slavery at present or in the future. He further pointed out that Louisiana was willing to abide by the terms of the Missouri Compromise of 1820.²⁸ The Governor ended his address with this warning: "The issue has been forced, and it should be respectfully and temperately met with a firm and uncompromising resistance. Let us at least take care that they who have sowed the speck of storm shall not force us to reap the whirlwind."²⁹

The Legislature enacted a number of important laws, among which was one redistricting the state for the purposes of representation in the General Assembly.³⁰ Another provided for a Board of Health under state authority.³¹ Its work done, the General Assembly adjourned, not to meet again in regular session until 1850 when it convened in Baton Rouge, the site of the new state capitol.³²

The public school system at this time was struggling to operate on its limited revenues. At that date there were in attendance less than 5,000 pupils of a potential attendance of 29,660; its

²² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Fortier, *Louisiana* (Cyclopedic), I, 597; *Weekly Delta*, February 18, 19, 1848.

²⁶ Louisiana *House Journal*, 1848, p. 14. The "Wilmot Proviso" in its simplest terms would, by federal action, prohibit slavery in any of the territory acquired from Mexico at the close of the war. It was the dominant issue in the presidential campaign of 1848. Norton "A History of the Whig Party in Louisiana," 295.

²⁷ Louisiana *House Journal*, 1848, p. 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁰ Fortier, *Louisiana* (Cyclopedic), I, 597.

³¹ Louisiana *Acts*, 1848, No. 172, p. 110; *Louisiana Courier*, April 10, 1849.

³² Fortier, *Louisiana* (Cyclopedic), I, 597.

capital represented \$1,492,000 in property valuations, but very little money had been appropriated for current expenditures in 1847.³³ The Legislature had neglected to make an appropriation for the schools at the regular session of January, 1848; so it was necessary to call a special session to convene in December, 1848, to alleviate this condition.³⁴ At this special session the General Assembly passed a law which appropriated immediately \$550,000 for the public schools and provided for an annual appropriation of \$225,000.³⁵ Of this session it was said: "What use is it for our Legislature to spend a large amount of money to establish a system, and then afterward blast it in its infancy?"³⁶

The Governor, meanwhile, busied himself with other pressing matters. The high water of 1849 was exceptionally severe, and every day reports arrived describing new breaks in the levees and additional lands inundated by the flood.³⁷ Parts of the city of New Orleans were under water, and the loss and suffering in the country parishes were very great.³⁸ Since the Legislature was not in session, there was very little the Governor could do to lessen the suffering. Coincident with these tragic events the Chief Executive showed great interest in the foreign affairs of the time; many of the peoples of Europe were struggling for independence from tyranny. The people of Italy were struggling for freedom from Austrian domination.³⁹ Governor Johnson presided at a mass meeting in New Orleans which adopted resolutions favoring the struggles of the Italians.⁴⁰

About the middle of the year 1849 the announcement came from Baton Rouge that the new capitol building was nearing completion and would be ready for the meeting of the General Assembly in January, 1850.⁴¹ The Memphis Railroad Convention met in October, 1849, and Governor Johnson appointed Solomon W. Downs, R. W. Richardson, and John C. Sharp to represent Louisiana at that gathering.⁴² Shortly before the seat of gov-

³³ First Report of the Superintendent of Public Education, 3.

³⁴ Planters' Banner and Louisiana Agriculturist, August 31, 1848.

³⁵ Louisiana Acts, 1848, No. 22, p. 12; Baton Rouge Gazette, December 23, 1848.

³⁶ Baton Rouge Gazette, December 16, 1848.

³⁷ Baton Rouge Gazette, Louisiana Courier, Daily Picayune, Daily Delta, April 21-May 22, 1849.

³⁸ Daily Picayune, May 22, 1849.

³⁹ Ibid., June 24, 1849. Beginning in 1848, there had been revolutions in France, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Italy, and Germany. Some were of short duration, while others lasted for some years. They were precipitated by the French Revolution of February, 1848, and were influenced by it.

⁴⁰ Daily Picayune, June 24, 1849.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Louisiana Courier, September 19, 1849. The Railroad Convention to discuss increased construction of southern railroads was not very popular in Louisiana. The Louisiana delegation did not attend. Daily Picayune, October 22, 1849. For an account of the Convention proceedings, see DeBow's Review, VIII (1850), 217-232.

ernment was to be removed the people of New Orleans held a dinner in honor of the Governor. The affair was widely attended, and party lines and partisan feelings were forgotten as the city united in paying respect to the Chief Magistrate.⁴³

Early in December, 1849, Governor Johnson and the other principal state officers boarded a steamboat and proceeded to Baton Rouge.⁴⁴ The office of the Attorney-General remained in New Orleans, because, under the provisions of an act of the Legislature of 1813, it was required that this officer prosecute all cases in the First Judicial District.⁴⁵ On December 3, 1849, the officers of the state government arrived in Baton Rouge. At noon a reception committee accompanied the officials to the Methodist Church where an address was delivered by Governor Johnson thanking the speaker, P. H. Morgan, and the people of Baton Rouge for the flattering reception given him and his colleagues.⁴⁶

For the remainder of his term Johnson was not on the friendliest terms with his fellow Democrats.⁴⁷ At the time of his election and during his tenure of office the great personal popularity of the man and the amiability of his manner went far to disarm party virulence. He even gained the support and good will of the opposition.⁴⁸ It was not his nature to be a violent partisan. His desire to compromise and win the good will of all the people did not make him a "good party man." Rather than adhere to strict party rule, he appointed members of the opposition to office.⁴⁹ For this he was never quite forgiven by the Democrats. While his personal popularity increased to include even the Whigs, he lost many of his party friends to whom he had owed his election.⁵⁰

The Legislature met for the first time in Baton Rouge in January, 1850. One of Governor Johnson's first requests in his message was for the repair and construction of levees. He also recommended that the date of Congressional elections in Louisiana be changed, pointing out that under the existing system the state was without representation for sixty days. The elections were held one month before Congress met, and a month

⁴³ *Daily Picayune*, November 25, 1849.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, December 7, 1849.

⁴⁵ *Louisiana Courier*, January 28, 1850.

⁴⁶ *Daily Picayune*, December 7, 1849. Morgan was chairman of the reception committee.

⁴⁷ *Daily Delta*, December 9, 1849.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

was required to tabulate the votes and announce the returns. It was his pleasure to inform the General Assembly that there were 22,000 children in attendance in the state's public school system, and he asked for continued generous appropriations for public education.

The question of slavery had by this time divided the attitude of the country, the industrial North and the agrarian South. Neither would yield and the country gradually progressed toward the catastrophic struggle of 1861.⁵¹ On the subject of slavery Governor Johnson observed very emphatically:

It is with a feeling of lively satisfaction that I see the South poising herself in a lofty and patriotic attitude in defense of her rights. The repeated galling and unprovoked aggressions of the anti-slavery element leave no room to anticipate a cessation of hostilities. The South, I think has been sufficiently warned that if it is wise to hope for the best, it is equally prudent to prepare for the worst.

Referring again to the "Wilmot Proviso" which he had previously denounced, Governor Johnson said:

The Territories belong equally to all the states, and can only be disposed of and governed for common benefit. Equality is the foundation on which the Union rests; destroy it and there is no longer a Union in virtue of a Constitution. The territories should settle the question of slavery themselves when they are ready to enter the Union.

It was further stated that should the "Proviso" become law, it would set a precedent for Congress to prohibit slavery at its discretion. He urged that the Legislature take the proper steps to send delegates to the Southern Rights Convention to be held in Nashville in June.⁵²

Governor Isaac Johnson concluded his last address to the General Assembly of Louisiana by voicing his appreciation for the cooperation given him by the members of that body. He said:

The affectionate confidence and generous forbearance with which I have been honored during the last four years will ever linger with me, a most grateful memory; and if I shall have acquired the right to think that the official labors

⁵¹ Avery Craven, "Slavery and the Civil War," in *Southern Review*, IV (1938), 243-255.

⁵² The legislators thought that this Convention would harm rather than help the cause of southern rights, consequently Louisiana was not represented in it. Public opinion in Louisiana in 1850 was in favor of the preservation of the Union. Mary E. Welborn Prichard, "Louisiana and the Compromise of 1850" (M.A. Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1929), 35-40.

of those four years have not been devoted all in vain, the thought will remain with me in my retirement an unfailing source of pride and happiness.⁵³

The executive duties of Isaac Johnson were over. He was now Ex-Governor Johnson, for he retired from office on January 28, 1850.⁵⁴ His friends in New Orleans held a huge banquet in his honor shortly after his retirement, and this gathering paid special tribute to him for his splendid work during the Mexican War. In addition, they presented him with a handsome riding horse.⁵⁵

CHAPTER VI

ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND RETIREMENT, 1850-1853

Desire to retire from public life — Appointed Attorney-General — Marriage to Miss Johnson — Son, Joel, born, died 1852 — Settlement of McDonogh estate — Movement to nominate Johnson for Congress from the Third District — The state banking controversy — Orleans Navigation Company case — Constitutional Convention of 1852 — Retirement to private life — Candidate for Associate Justice of the Supreme Court — Illness, confined to bed — Death — Journey to West Feliciana — Burial at "Troy" — Mourning for thirty days in West Feliciana — The estate of Isaac Johnson — The heirs of Isaac Johnson — Remarks of Isaac Morse before the Supreme Court — Summary.

Though Isaac Johnson may have expressed a desire to retire from public life, he was able to do so for only a short while.¹ Even before his retirement from the office of governor, his friends were actively urging his appointment as an associate justice of the supreme court.² However, this movement did not materialize, for on February 15, 1850, Governor Joseph Marshall Walker, who had succeeded Johnson as governor, appointed the ex-governor to the office of Attorney-General of Louisiana.³

The West Felicianian accepted this position embarking on another phase of his political career.⁴ Now he could be nearer his beloved Feliciana, for the Legislature of 1850 had passed a law requiring the Attorney-General to reside in Baton Rouge.⁵

⁵³ Fortier, *Louisiana* (Cyclopedic), I, 598; *Daily Picayune*, January 22, 1850; *Baton Rouge Gazette*, January 22, 1850; *Louisiana Courier*, January 22, 1850; *Bee*, January 24, 1850.

⁵⁴ Fortier, *Louisiana* (Cyclopedic), I, 598.

⁵⁵ *Daily Delta*, February 21, 1850.

¹ *Daily Picayune*, January 22, 1850.

² *Daily Delta*, January 18, 1850.

³ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, February 16, 1850. Walker had served as State Treasurer while Johnson was Governor.

⁴ *Daily Delta*, February 17, 1850.

⁵ *Louisiana Acts*, 1850, No. 351, p. 259.

To be sure, the duties of the new office were to Johnson's liking, for in his new capacity he was required to prosecute only civil cases.⁶

Sometime between the year 1847 and 1850 Isaac Johnson married again.⁷ He was wed to a Miss Johnson of Kentucky. Though bearing the same name, the two were not related.⁸ Of this union was born a son, Joel, in July, 1852. In November of the same year the child died.⁹ When Isaac Johnson died in the following year, the widow went to live in Lockport, Arkansas, and was not included in the division of his property.¹⁰

It was not long before Johnson attracted attention to his work as Attorney-General. In the quarrel between the cities of Baltimore and New Orleans no settlement had been reached in the division of the legacy left the two cities by the late John McDonogh. The will had provided that after paying the obligations of the deceased, the remainder of the large estate was to be divided equally between the cities of Baltimore and New Orleans.¹¹ When no decision could be reached, Johnson, as Attorney-General, filed a petition in the Fifth District Court of Louisiana, asking that all the property in question be turned over to the State of Louisiana.¹² He further requested that in the interim the property should be sequestered in the hands of the sheriff of the Parish of Orleans, so as to keep the matter out of the United States courts.¹³

The trial was set for February 10, 1851.¹⁴ Arguments in the case were heard, and a decision was rendered on Monday, February 18, 1851. The verdict of Judge Buchanan was to the effect that the State of Louisiana had no claim upon the estate.¹⁵ Though the efforts of the Attorney-General had been in vain, the Legislature of 1852 commended and approved his action in the case.¹⁶

Even though Johnson was occupied with his work as Attorney-General, his friends continued to urge his name for higher

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, November 9, 1850. This marks the first time any public mention was made of Johnson and his second wife, so far as the author has been able to determine.

⁸ Arthur and de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, 168; West Feliciana Parish Inventory Records, 1853, pp. 44-48.

⁹ Grace Church Records, B, 12.

¹⁰ Meynier, *Louisiana Biographies*, Pt. I, p. 28.

¹¹ *Weekly Delta*, December 5, 1850.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, December 20, 1850.

¹⁴ *Daily Delta*, February 11, 1851.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, February 19, 1851.

¹⁶ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, May 1, 1852.

office. They began a movement to have him nominated as a candidate for Congress from the Third District.¹⁷ However, his name was not placed in nomination at the Democratic State Convention held at Baton Rouge on November 21, 1850. It is not difficult to understand why Isaac Johnson was not anxious for the nomination, since he was not the type who sought elective office.¹⁸

Another incident in which Johnson figured during his term of office as legal adviser for the state was the state banking controversy. The Louisiana State Bank, fiscal agent for the state, had established a branch in Baton Rouge. George McWhortle, State Treasurer, charged that this act of extension of the facilities of the bank was illegal. Charles Gayarré, Secretary of State, took the opposite view. When Johnson's opinion was demanded, he began by saying that it was not his duty to attack an act of the Legislature. He continued: "The act in question is not a violation of the Constitution. The word, 'extended', refers to a prolongation of the term for which the bank is incorporated, not to the capital, circulation, or business of the bank." Thus Johnson did not regard the extension as a violation, thereby deciding in favor of Gayarré's contention. Following this the controversy resolved itself into a bitter quarrel between the Secretary of State and the State Treasurer.¹⁹

In another instance the Attorney-General sought to annul the charter of the Orleans Navigation Company.²⁰ It was charged that the company was violating its charter by declaring dividends and discounting notes when it was insolvent.²¹ It was an attempt to regain for the state the lease granted this company for navigation on Bayou St. John and Canal Carondelet. The State Supreme Court sustained the claims of the state.²² The Company appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. This august body ruled that both the state and the navigation concern were in error, since the Legislature had passed an act to sell the property.²³

Meanwhile a clamor was heard for changing the Constitution of 1845. The movement was defeated at first, but the demand

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 2, 1850, quoting *Pointe Coupée Echo*.

¹⁸ Meynier, *Louisiana Biographies*, Pt. I, p. 27.

¹⁹ *Weekly Delta*, March 1, 1851.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, May 3, 1851. The State of Louisiana vs. Orleans Navigation Company.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Daily Delta*, May 28, 1851.

²³ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1852.

grew among the more radical element. Finally a Constitutional Convention was called in July, 1852.²⁴ The new Constitution provided for more liberal qualifications for voters, increased membership of the state supreme court from four to five members, and divided the state into four public works districts. It further set forth that amendments to the Constitution must be passed by a three-fourths majority of both houses of the Legislature and ratified by the people; that there should be annual sessions of the Legislature; and that the secretary of state, state treasurer, and attorney-general should be elected by popular vote. The Constitution was submitted to the people and was ratified in the election held on November 2, 1852.²⁵ Isaac Johnson was not a candidate to succeed himself as Attorney-General, and he retired to private life.

He was not to remain so for long, for in January, 1853, a Baton Rouge paper carried the announcement of Honorable Isaac Johnson as a candidate for associate justice of the state supreme court.²⁶ His activities in the campaign were somewhat hampered by a temporary lameness in one leg, to which he alluded jocularly as "the disadvantage of running on one leg."²⁷ His chances of success were very good, for as one editor expressed it, "In this section of the country no man, at one time, ever enjoyed anything like his popularity."²⁸

But Isaac Johnson did not live to see the results of the election. Though he had been complaining for some time, none thought he was seriously affected. Finally he was confined to his bed in the Veranda Hotel in New Orleans for three weeks.²⁹ On March 15, 1853, he seemed improved, and partook of his meals with more than ordinary appetite.³⁰ About nine o'clock that night, after talking cheerfully with his daughter, who had been at his bedside, he expired suddenly of a heart attack.³¹

The afternoon following his death the remains of the late Attorney-General and former Governor of Louisiana were carried from the hotel to the steamboat *Emperor* to be transported to his home in West Feliciana. The procession was headed by a

²⁴ Fortier, *Louisiana (Cyclopedic)*, I. 256.

²⁵ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, August 7, 14, November 6, 1852.

²⁶ *Baton Rouge Daily Comet*, January 25, 1853; *Planters' Banner*, February 10, 1853.

²⁷ *Daily Delta*, March 17, 1853.

²⁸ *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, March 16, 1853. Letter from Baton Rouge to the Editor.

²⁹ *Daily Delta*, March 16, 1853.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*; *Daily Picayune*, March 16, 1853; *Bee*, March 17, 1853.

detachment of militia, and several prominent citizens acted as pallbearers.³² The steamboat departed amid the booming of cannon to proceed to Baton Rouge, where it was to stop for a short time. When the vessel stopped at the landing in Baton Rouge, people crowded aboard to take a last look at the stately and dignified form that had so recently served the people of Louisiana.³³ Guns at the barracks in Baton Rouge fired as the boat carrying the body and friends of the late governor went by. The proceedings of the Legislature were interrupted, and an honor guard of thirty-two members was named to accompany the sad group to St. Francisville.³⁴ Here in quiet and peaceful Grace Church the last rites were held,³⁵ then the cortege, in the largest procession ever seen in West Feliciana to that date, proceeded to the family burial ground at "Troy".³⁶ Almost within sight of the house in which he was born, Isaac Johnson was laid to rest. To the very end he was surrounded by intimate friends and loved ones.³⁷

Following the burial a mass meeting of the people of West Feliciana was held. It was here resolved that the badge of mourning in remembrance of their late friend and fellow citizen be worn for thirty days.³⁸

Surviving Isaac Johnson were his widow and three children by his first wife.³⁹ His estate, valued at \$17,139.75 in personal property and slaves, was turned over to his daughter Anne, the eldest of the surviving children.⁴⁰ Again in that same year the grim reaper struck the little Johnson family, for on August 14th the elder son, Charles, died of yellow fever.⁴¹ A few weeks later the younger son, Walter, succumbed to the ravages of the fever. Both were buried near their father at "Troy". As has been previously stated, the daughter, Anne, married Dr. Percy Sargent, a grandson of Lieutenant Robert Percy. She died in 1856.

The news of Isaac Johnson's death was sudden. All had become so accustomed to see him or hear his name, that they could not realize that he was dead.⁴² His elections and appoint-

³² *Daily Crescent*, March 17, 1853.

³³ *Daily Comet*, March 18, 1853.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Grace Church Records, A, 214, March 18, 1853.

³⁶ *Daily Comet*, March 27, 1853.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ West Feliciana Parish Inventory Records, G (1852-1869), 199.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Grace Church Records, A, 215.

⁴² *Ibid.*

ments to public office had received the plaudits and approbation of all, for no person in the state was more popular and more respected for his personal qualities and abilities.⁴³ The editor of the *Picayune* wrote: "Though not possessed of remarkable abilities, his reputation for moderation, courtesy, integrity, and general information were of an enviable nature. An honest and kind man and a good citizen go with him to the grave."⁴⁴ Before the Supreme Court of Louisiana, Isaac E. Morse, Johnson's successor as Attorney-General, made these appropriate remarks:

I may be permitted to say that in all domestic relations of life, as father, husband, son, neighbor, and master, his loss is irreparable; and when his public worth shall no longer be the theme of discussion, many a tear shall drop in silence, and his manly form and private virtues will ever remain in the memory of those who knew him best, and loved him most.⁴⁵

Thus ended the career of one of Louisiana's outstanding sons. Coming from a family of leaders, it is interesting to note that he exhibited no particular qualities of leadership.⁴⁶ Possessed of no remarkable abilities, he could always be identified with the outstanding local events of the day. His reputation as a lawyer was well known in his district. A study of the District Court records of East and West Feliciana parishes will show, beyond a doubt, that in by far the greater percentage of cases, verdicts were returned in favor of his clients. It is easy to understand why a man of his nature showed no inclination toward criminal practice.⁴⁷

His career as legislator, brief as it was, actually bears out Isaac Johnson's character. The fact that he participated in none of the violent debates, characteristic of the Legislature, suggests a retiring nature. As a representative he did not have much to offer for the record. This may be due in part to the fact that he served with the brilliant Alexander Barrow, who certainly would have overshadowed greater men than Isaac Johnson. Nevertheless, his participation in the movements of the day gave Johnson a fine background for the future.

⁴³ *Daily Picayune*, March 17, 1853.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Remarks of the Attorney-General before the Supreme Court.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Daily Delta*, March 17, 1853.

It was as a district judge that Johnson really became well known. There has never, perhaps, been a more popular judge in the district.⁴⁸ It was in the judiciary that his real interest lay. In later life he was on numerous occasions a candidate for judiciary positions. At the time of his death he was a candidate for associate justice of the state supreme court; and there is little doubt that had he lived he would have been elected.⁴⁹

As governor, Isaac Johnson had a difficult time. A young man himself, a legislature made up of inexperienced members, and the Constitution of 1845 to put into effect made it so. His four years as governor were highly successful so far as the progress of the state was concerned. Health conditions improved, for the deaths in the New Orleans Charity Hospital dropped from 20.9% of those admitted in 1839 to only 9.98% of those admitted in 1850.⁵⁰ School attendance increased from 3,573 in 1840⁵¹ to 25,046 in 1850.⁵² The total population of the state increased from 352,411 in 1840 to 517,762 in 1850.⁵³ The production of cotton in the state increased from 178,737 bales in 1840 to 383,888 bales in 1850.⁵⁴ The number of slaves in Louisiana increased from 168,452 in 1840 to 244,809 in 1850.⁵⁵

Thus Louisiana, during the most important decade of Isaac Johnson's public life, made great progress. Such progress must surely have been due partly to his efforts during his term as governor. Though he made many mistakes, he filled the office of governor with patriotism and honesty. The blunders he committed were not of his own choosing, but were due rather to his desire to follow the letter of the law.⁵⁶ Through all his years in private and public life he was the same model of the perfect gentleman, and he obtained the voluntary homage and respect of all who knew him.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ *Baton Rouge Gazette*, March 4, April 1, 1843.

⁴⁹ *Daily Crescent*, March 19, 1853.

⁵⁰ J. D. B. DeBow, editor *Statistical View of the United States . . . Compendium of the Seventh Census . . .* (Washington, 1854), 110.

⁵¹ *United States Census Report*, 1840, p. 63.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 1850, p. 142; *Louisiana State Superintendent of Education Report*, 1849, p. 3.

⁵³ *United States Census Report*, 1850, p. 40.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁵⁶ *Daily Delta*, March 17, 1853.

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BOOK REVIEWS

By ANDRE LAFARGUE

Deep Delta Country. By Harnett T. Kane. (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1944. Pp. xx, 283. \$3.00.)

Our fellow citizen and distinguished young writer, Harnett T. Kane, had already won fame and recognition with his two preceding books, *Louisiana Hayride*, the vivid and never-to-be-forgotten account of the political scandals that very unfortunately took place in the days of the colorful "Kingfish" of Louisiana, Huey P. Long, and *The Bayous of Louisiana*, a delightful and most comprehensive work dealing with the two legendary streams, Bayou Teche and Bayou Lafourche, the settlements thereon, the inhabitants thereof, their ways, customs, character and traditions as well as the true visage, both physical and spiritual, of the section of Louisiana in which they lived. One would have thought that our young and genial author would have rested on his laurels as it were, for a brief period of time, basking in the sunshine—if I may so express myself—of the plaudits of the critics and of his fellow men, but not so with Harnett T. Kane, whose vitality, energy and boundless interest in everything that appertains to his native State of Louisiana, will endlessly and ceaselessly lead him to new fields of literary endeavor for his and our great benefit.

His latest publication, *Deep Delta Country*, forming part of the series of *American Folkways* edited by Erskine Caldwell and published by Duell, Sloan and Pearce of New York, is a veritable masterpiece of its kind. Its comprehensive, valuable and informative character has unquestionably added new lustre to the fame of the sympathetic and untiring young writer. I know and feel sure that it ranks among the best volumes in the *American Folkways* series. It is bound to loom up prominently among the books already published in that series, such as *Desert Country*, *Palmetto Country*, *Pinon Country*, *Mormon Country*, and many others that have made the series a famous one, veritable steppingstones of a geographical, geophysical, folklorish and regional pattern in the domain of history and of the true visage of our country as exemplified by the soil, the streams that irrigate it and fashion it, and the inhabitants and their ways that live thereon. *Deep Delta Country* is a serious book for serious-minded readers, and yet its

contents can be read with sheer delight and interest by all those who do not wish to be bored by a thousand-page novel of doubtful merit or who do not care to be trapped into the intrigue of a story of a fantastic and unrealistic development and conclusion. *Deep Delta Country* might aptly be termed: "The Saga of 'Ole Man River' as he nears his wedding to the sea." Its dramatic qualities and its absorbingly truthful and appealing story place it in a niche of its own, wherein a mere novel would appear insipid and colorless.

The publishers of *America Folkways* could not have addressed themselves to a more competent writer on the subject. Harnett T. Kane, in his previous book, *The Bayous of Louisiana*, had shown us that he was quite familiar with the country he was asked to write about in his present work, *Deep Delta Country*. A student of humanity in its broadest and most appealing sense, Harnett T. Kane, as I have said before, mingles with the folks he writes about, lives with them, becomes their friend and confidant, earns their respect and friendship, shares in their joys and sorrows, sincerely and sympathetically, and when he writes about them he therefore does so with an intimate knowledge of their daily lives, their occupations, their folklore and the atavic and ancestral traits which they display.

Long before he wrote *Deep Delta Country* Kane had become an *habitué* of the "Lower Coast," as the Delta country is often referred to by some folks in common and popular fashion. St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes, the two delta parishes have revealed to him their true visage, their geological and geographical conformations, their evolutions under and above water, their never ceasing amphibious transformations, and the inhabitants of this very picturesque section of our State were so charmed by his personal company, his kindly interest in their affairs, his sincerity of purpose, and above all his keen and subtle sense of humor that like the "Delta" itself, or rather like the big stream that forms this delta country and runs out into the Gulf with outstretched fingers (the outlets), whose forearm is the big river as it nears its mouth, they have grasped his hand in warm friendship and have opened their hearts and minds to the young writer, who, in this third book of his, has revealed himself to the literary critics of our time and to the world at large as one of the most promising writers of Louisiana and, indeed, of these United States of America, one to whom the future beckons in encouraging and most successful appeal.

From the Introduction, "Paradise Incomplete," and right through the subdivisions or main parts, "The Glory Days," "The Melting Pot," and "Shadows and Turbulence," to the very end of the book, the reader becomes thoroughly acquainted with a region of Louisiana, extending from New Orleans itself to the very outlet of the Mississippi, whose aspect and physical conformation are not very attractive to one who contemplates them from the deck of a steamship ploughing its way upward or downstream through the Delta Country, but every blade of grass of which, every clod of soil of which, and every settlement of which the young author is familiar with and tells us about in his own intimate style of graphic and dramatic interest.

Deep Delta Country is of multicolored and picturesquely fashioned weaving. The early settlers on the banks of the turgid and turbulent old stream were either of French birth or of French descent. Even today the French racial element predominates. But these early settlers as they thrived, and won at times, in their fight against the encroaching river and the backwaters of the coastal swamps or sea marshes of Louisiana on the fringe of the Gulf, were joined in their work as trappers, fishermen, cultivators, sugar plantation owners, orange grove cultivators, and in their horticultural pursuits and industrial endeavors by Irishmen, Italians, and a very large colony of Dalmatians and Jugo-Slavians, and today they constitute a heterogeneous ensemble, who live in harmony and in thrift side by side.

The real and authentic history of the Delta Country has been written fully and forcibly in this recent work of Harnett T. Kane; its political phases, its sociological development, its everlasting fight against the elements, the caprices and angry upsurgings of "Old Man River" and of the Gulf itself, the thrift, bravery and tenacity of the inhabitants of the region, are all commented upon by the author in masterful fashion. It is really a wonderful book and a most valuable addition to one's library.

Royal Street: A Novel of Old New Orleans. By W. Adolphe Roberts. (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1944. Pp. 324. \$2.75.)

We of New Orleans never refer to the "dear old street" without conjuring up instantaneously a vision of the past of a most enchanting and lasting character. Canal Street is, of course, the

main thoroughfare of our city. It divides the metropolis into two distinct urban sections; the great stores center thereon; all streetcars and bus lines lead to it or start from it, and it is the scene on both sides of its wide and beautiful walks of a constant parade of humanity in which are to be found all types of human beings, the business and feverishly preoccupied people, walking fast and inattentive to the passing show, those of the gentler sex who wish to show their clothes and newly-purchased hats, the listless and indifferent, the slow-walking and observant who stop every now and then to examine the contents of an attractive show window or just to look at their passing fellow men and women; but "Royal Street" is the gem of the *Vieux Carré* and unquestionably the most typical and historical of its thoroughfares. In this instance the *Royal Street* to which I refer is the title of a most interesting novel by W. Adolphe Roberts, and it is aptly subtitled *A Novel of Old New Orleans*. It might also have been named very properly "New Orleans of One Hundred Years Ago," for it deals with that period in our municipal history as concretely evidenced by the life of the southern metropolis on its main and most historic thoroughfare of that particular time.

Mr. Roberts surely has most felicitously described the charm and local color of Royal Street in its many aspects of social life, commercial enterprise, religious activity, sporting fervor and perpetual rounds of festivity which it so prominently and so vividly displayed one hundred years ago, or thereabouts, at a time when New Orleans blended and combined in never-to-be-forgotten fashion the main characteristics of Old World picturesqueness and of budding New World or American dash and enterprise.

Prior to writing this book the author lived for several months in a typical house of the *Vieux Carré*, or original section of the city, at the corner of St. Peter and Royal streets, a dwelling adorned with a gracefully curving gallery on its second floor, from which Mr. Roberts, the writer, must have time and again surveyed the street after which he named his novel and retrospectively must have envisioned its physical and spiritual aspect in the days about which he wrote. For such purposes the abode could not have been more wisely chosen, for the corner of St. Peter and Royal streets is right in the very pulsating heart of Royal Street of the past and of the present.

The story is delightfully told, in simple, terse and very good English language, that of the King—for Mr. Roberts is an English subject—of an undeniable literary brand. The main characters, Victor Olivier, brave, serious-minded for one of his age and time, chivalrous, and naturally “tall, dark and handsome,” always dressed immaculately and having all the blandishments and appeals that the gentler sex would look for in one of their “heroes,” though by no means a fop or weakling; “Cherie” Lamotte, the heroine, piquant, lofty minded, independent, brave and of the same ilk and kind as her lover, Victor; Teresa Cardero, an exotic human flower of irresistible appeal, a cousin of Victor, born and reared in Santo Domingo, are the three figures upon whom the story mainly converges, but are not the only actors in the drama that Mr. Roberts has conceived and evolved, as there are others who fit in most aptly in the story and help to give it distinct atmosphere and charm. As a matter of fact, the background of the story is made up of intensely lifelike characters, representative of the families, occupations, trades, professions and political beliefs of the day.

The author has added to the local color of his story by mentioning therein representatives of some of the most prominent Creole and American families of the time, such as the Oliviers, the Slidells, the Beauregards, the du Quesnays, the Gayarrés, the Meffré-Rouzans, the Barbés, the Girards and Gerards and many others, whose names and participation in the romantic action of the story give it a realistic color that it might otherwise have lacked. I highly commend the method. It naturally arouses in the reader renewed interest when he comes across names that are familiar to him and that were borne by contemporaries of the time evoked and written about. Most of these people played an important part in shaping the destinies of old “New Orleans;” and while the story is a novel and, like all novels, is meant to be interesting and captivating by the intrigue, action and developments, the names of our prominent Creole and American families interlaced, as it were, in the story, add to its charm and historical atmosphere.

Mr. Roberts is likewise to be complimented in resurrecting for the purpose of his story the two most interesting figures of the two leaders of the contending political factions of the time, Judah P. Benjamin and John Slidell, who enact their part in the novel in masterful fashion, who are truthfully described in their moods,

inclinations, and aspirations, and whose remarks and statements follow very faithfully the pattern of their real lives and deeds. The introduction of these men in the story, men who really lived and acted, men who in body, soul and flesh acted and carried on in the days referred to by the author, adds immensely to the background and authentic setting of the novel.

But of all the phases of Creole life in New Orleans of one hundred years ago which Mr. Roberts depicts in most attractive and historically accurate fashion, the predominating and thrilling one is that of dueling. The *Code Duello* has never had a better or more entertaining historian. The famous fencing masters of the day, the ever colorful and legendary Pépé Llulla, his peers and inferiors; Exchange Alley, where the fencing schools were conducted; the many bouts that took place therein and the several "affairs of honor" of the very best type under the "Duelling Oaks" at City Park, are referred to and narrated with evident gusto and most reliable and authentic information. The novel could have been, indeed, entitled "Dueling in its best and most approved form in New Orleans of One Hundred Years Ago." Those who are fond of historic New Orleans must read *Royal Street*. It resurrects an attractive past.